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## Trends in City-School Organization 1938 to 1948

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# RESEARCH BULLETIN OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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# FOREWORD

SCHOOL organization in the United States has never been static. From the days of the earliest colonial schools to the present moment patterns of school organization have steadily changed in response to new conditions, new purposes in education, and apparent, unmet needs. Sometimes new types of schools have come into existence, flourished, and declined—for example, the academy. Various "plans" have followed one another, sometimes into oblivion. Widely different arrangements have characterized the school day and the school term. Pupils have been grouped and classified in numerous ways for purposes of instruction and guidance.

Good teaching has been done, and is being done, in school systems that differ widely in their organizational policies and practices. Yet, the more perfectly the organization of every school system is geared to its own objectives and to the unique combination of circumstances under which its schools operate, the more likely it is that its goals can be achieved. Hence each community must continue to search unremittingly for the school organizational patterns and procedures which are locally most effective.

Concern with organizational problems quite properly increases in any period such as the present when many school systems thruout the nation are engaged in postwar self-appraisal and replanning. Also, insistent demands that the schools shall open their doors to many more pupils, both young and old, and that they shall add new types of instruction and service to those being offered are now creating unusual interest in the structure of the school program. If the schools are to assume such broadened duties, extensive reorganization for many of them will be quite inevitable.

One source of help to which school leaders turn in their search for better practices is prevailing patterns and trends in school organization. This source is not infallible. The "right" solution for a given problem may not yet have been developed; or the best available solution may be in use in so few schools that it is all but hidden by "prevailing practice." Yet the trend of practice *is* significant, for it often provides a clue to some readjustment which, for the community concerned, is an innovation that represents real progress. Also, at other times a survey of practice clearly reveals the areas in which prevailing trends lag deplorably behind the best that is known.

It is hoped that the survey of trends reported in this bulletin will point the way to sound appraisal and to better practices. Its effect will be slight if it is used only as a descriptive document but far-reaching if it becomes the stimulus, and to some extent a guide, to extensive discussion and educational planning.

The bulletin should be of special interest to administrative and supervisory officers in city-school systems, to the members of advisory committees who are working with superintendents and schoolboards on organizational policies and procedures, and to students of administrative trends in colleges and departments of education.

WILLARD E. GIVENS, *Executive Secretary,*
*National Education Association.*

# I. Introduction

This report is essentially an overview of selected practices in school organization in city-school systems. In broad outline it indicates the scope of city-school programs—the upper and lower limits. Likewise it indicates the administrative units, or divisions, that are in common use; the grade groupings; the existence or absence of various special schools, departments, and services; adherence to, or abandonment of, various administrative policies; the length of the school period, school day, and school year; class size; and certain other trends in school management.

School organization involves so many factors and the interrelations among them are so complex that it is obviously necessary in a bulletin such as this to select certain items and to omit a great many which, perhaps to some readers, will seem of equal or greater importance than those that are included. It is hoped, however, that the items here selected will be of general interest and help to those responsible for the organization and management of schools.

## Source of Information

The facts presented in this bulletin were obtained from a questionnaire distributed in November 1947 to all superintendents of schools in cities over 2500 in population. Replies were received from 1598 school systems, or approximately half of the city systems to which the inquiry was sent. As is regularly true, certain items were omitted by some respondents; but as the tables show, the summaries are based for the most part on replies from approximately 1600 city-school systems. The total number and percent of replies by city size and geographic region, in comparison with the total number of cities in each group and region, are shown in Table 1.

The percent of replies is highest for the largest cities and for the Middle, Middle Atlantic, Far West, and Northwest regions. The number of replies in the sample is 42 percent of the total number of cities. Also, as will be noted from columns 5 and 6 of Table 1, the percent of replies from cities in each group is quite similar to the percent distribution of city-school systems in the various population groups and regions. The largest numerical representation in any population group is for cities below 5000 in population. The largest numerical representation of any geographic region is for the Middle States (of the Great Lakes section).

The groupings shown in Table 1 are followed thruout the bulletin wherever differences in practice seem to be indicated for school systems of various sizes and for those located in the various regions.

As the basis for a survey of practice and trends in city-school systems the replies available for summary in this study seem to be an adequate and representative sample. In addition to the facts already noted it may be of interest that the combined enrolment of these school systems (approximately 7,750,000 pupils) is nearly two-thirds of the total 1946 enrolment for all city-school systems.

Data are included only for school systems in urban communities. Differences in the patterns of urban and rural organization, difficulties of sampling and adequate coverage if the attempt were made to include both groups, and limitations of time and resources were among the factors which led to this decision. For policies and practices with respect to which the trends presumably are much the same in rural and urban areas, rural-school administrators may be able to derive some guidance. With respect to many problems, however, for example, pupil transportation, the differences in scope and purpose of the activities are so great that any attempt at generalization, or transfer of the findings, would be unwise.

Wherever it seemed feasible, the questionnaire items called for comparative information, many times for figures relating to practices in 1947-48 as compared with the corresponding data for 1937-38, or in some instances, for less specific comparisons. The facts reported in this bulletin, therefore, not only give an overview of present practice but also indicate the direction of the prevailing trends in school organization and, when possible, the approximate rate of change which characterizes them.

## How To Use the Bulletin

This survey of current trends affords no blueprint to be slavishly followed. Some policy or plan, tho followed in a thousand schools, might conceivably be just as wrong as if it were used in only ten. Conversely, other practices may have great merit when only a few schools are using them. Beyond the fact of what is done must stand the judgment as to *why?* or *why not?* In other words the knowledge of what exists should initiate inquiry and self-appraisal rather than provide stock solutions to problems that usually are unique and quite complex.

From this bulletin the administrator can get the answer to such questions as: (a) Are kindergartens increasing or decreasing in number in cities of a given size? (b) Is departmentalization being used more or less frequently than in former years in elementary schools? (c) Is the school year getting longer or shorter in city-school systems? (d) What is happening to the length of the school day? the class period? (e) Is class size increasing or decreasing?

With these facts of status at hand, each community still must answer for itself such questions as these: "Are additional kindergartens needed *in our community?*" "Would departmentalization help or hinder us to achieve *our goals* in elementary education?" and "What is the optimum class size *in our schools,* in view of both what we hope to accomplish and all the controlling circumstances that affect our program?" Only as the facts and trends of this report become the focal points of self-appraisal and constructive replanning will the bulletin accomplish its essential purposes.

**TABLE 1.—NUMBER AND PERCENT OF REPLIES BY CITY SIZE AND REGION**

| Population group and geographic region | Total number of city systems in the group[a] | Reports received | | Percent of the total represented by each group | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number | Percent | All city systems | Those reporting |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Over 100,000 | 92 | 67 | 73% | 3% | 4% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 268 | 164 | 61 | 7 | 10 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 778 | 384 | 49 | 20 | 24 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 1,050 | 456 | 43 | 28 | 29 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 1,608 | 527 | 33 | 42 | 33 |
| New England[b] | 368 | 116 | 32 | 10 | 7 |
| Middle Atlantic[c] | 824 | 375 | 46 | 22 | 24 |
| Southeast[d] | 654 | 152 | 23 | 17 | 10 |
| Middle[e] | 1,068 | 582 | 54 | 28 | 36 |
| Southwest[f] | 315 | 118 | 37 | 8 | 7 |
| Northwest[g] | 261 | 113 | 43 | 7 | 7 |
| Far West[h] | 306 | 142 | 46 | 8 | 9 |
| All groups | 3,796 | 1,598 | 42% | 100% | 100% |

[a] The figures given in this column exceed the number of cities as reported in *Sixteenth Census* (1940) for the following reasons: (a) the inclusion of certain New England communities over 2500 in population which prior to 1930 had been classified as urban but which were transferred to rural in 1930; and (b) counting the number of school systems rather than the number of cities where dual systems are in operation. In all such cases, however, the 1940 Census population figures for the various cities rather than the population of the school districts were used in classifying.

[b] Includes: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

[c] Includes: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

[d] Includes: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

[e] Includes: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

[f] Includes: Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

[g] Includes: Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

[h] Includes: California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.

## II. General Pattern of Organization

In spite of the common elements and many similarities which characterize American schools, numerous and important differences are also found from one community to another in the scope of school programs, in the manner in which schools are organized, and in the general policies which provide the framework of administrative operation. Many differences such as these are revealed in the paragraphs which follow.

### Types of City-School Systems

Not all of the city-school systems included in the present study represent complete programs of elementary and secondary education. Some reports are from elementary-school systems, some from high-school systems. The smaller the city the higher is the percent of such separate systems, altho the proportion is relatively small in every case. Among the geographic regions the Far West has much the highest percent of separate elementary and secondary city-school systems. The percents, by city size and region, are given in Table 2.[1]

### Kinds of Schools

A general overview of the proportion of city schools that fall in each of four broad categories and the percents of pupils enrolled in each type of school are given in Figure I for 1598 city-school systems. The first three types of schools indicated in the chart require no explanation. Those listed as "other types" include combined elementary and junior high schools, combined junior-senior high schools, twelve-year schools, and all special schools that are not properly classified as separate elementary, separate junior high, or separate senior high schools.

The proportion of elementary schools is considerably higher than the percent of pupils enrolled in them. Conversely, the percent of senior high-school pupils is much higher than the percent of senior high schools. These differences reflect the typical differences in size of elementary and senior high schools. The percent of junior high-school pupils and of pupils attending schools of "other types" is, in each case, quite close to the percent of such schools in city systems.

Since no clearly defined regional differences in the proportion of schools of different types or their enrolment could be noted from the tabulations, Table 3 gives the data only in terms of city size. The percent of senior high schools and the percent of schools of other types, for the most part combined schools such as junior-senior high schools, tend to increase

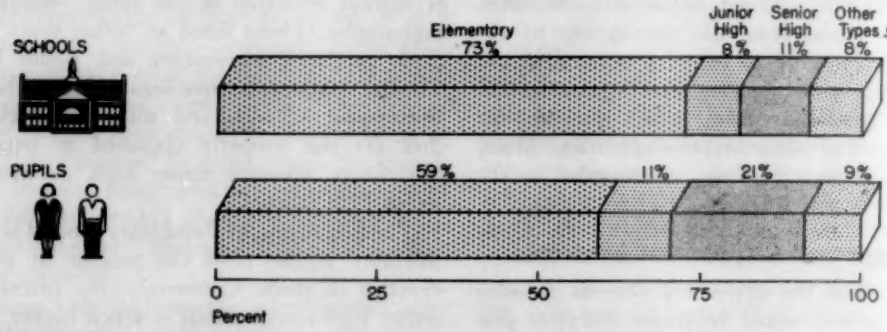
[1] This does not imply that some cities have elementary schools only, or high schools only. In some instances, there is an elementary-school district and a high-school district in the same city—the two systems being separately administered. Hence a few of the questionnaire reports used in this study cover either elementary-school systems or high-school systems, but not both.

TABLE 2.—TYPES OF CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS REPORTED, BY CITY SIZE AND REGION, 1947–48

| Group | Number reporting | Percent of the city-school systems reporting which include: Both elementary and secondary schools | Elementary schools only | Secondary schools only |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Over 100,000 | 67 | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 164 | 93 | 5 | 2 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 384 | 88 | 8 | 4 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 456 | 86 | 8 | 6 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 527 | 80 | 13 | 7 |
| New England | 116 | 97 | 3 | 0 |
| Middle Atlantic | 375 | 90 | 9 | 1 |
| Southeast | 152 | 93 | 7 | 0 |
| Middle | 582 | 83 | 10 | 7 |
| Southwest | 118 | 96 | 2 | 2 |
| Northwest | 113 | 92 | 4 | 4 |
| Far West | 142 | 56 | 25 | 19 |
| All groups | 100% | 86% | 9% | 5% |
| Number of cases | 1,598 | 1,372 | 146 | 80 |

FIGURE I

CLASSIFICATION OF CITY SCHOOLS INTO FOUR MAJOR TYPES AND THE PROPORTION OF PUPILS WHO ATTEND EACH TYPE, 1947-48




a/ Includes combined elementary and junior high schools, junior-senior high schools, twelve-year schools, and all special schools not properly classified as separate elementary, junior high, or senior high schools.

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TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND PERCENT OF SCHOOLS, AND OF THE PUPILS ENROLLED IN THEM, IN 1598 CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS

| Group | Total number of schools | Total number of pupils | Percent of schools, each type | | | | Percent of pupils in schools of each type | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Elementary | Junior high school | Senior high school | Other types[a] | Elementary | Junior high school | Senior high school | Other types[a] |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| Over 100,000 | 5,680 | 4,080,483 | 78% | 8% | 9% | 5% | 62% | 11% | 21% | 6% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 2,803 | 1,309,153 | 75 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 57 | 13 | 20 | 10 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 3,063 | 1,160,344 | 75 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 57 | 12 | 21 | 10 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 2,084 | 668,959 | 68 | 8 | 14 | 10 | 55 | 7 | 20 | 18 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 1,771 | 501,403 | 60 | 6 | 17 | 17 | 52 | 5 | 19 | 24 |
| All groups | 15,401 | 7,720,342 | 73% | 8% | 11% | 8% | 59% | 11% | 21% | 9% |

[a] Combined elementary and junior high schools, junior-senior high schools, twelve-year schools, and all other schools not properly classified as separate elementary, junior high, or senior high schools.

in inverse ratio to size of city (see columns 6 and 7). The same trend holds for the percent of pupils enrolled in the combined schools, or other types.

A difference tending in the opposite direction is the much smaller percent of pupils enrolled in separate junior high schools in each group of cities below 10,000 in population as compared with cities of larger size. This undoubtedly reflects the more extensive use of combined schools in the smaller city systems.

## Administrative Divisions

Many city-school systems use more than one series of administrative units for their various schools. For example, some elementary schools in a given city may include only the first four or five grades. Other elementary schools may include six or perhaps eight grades. One school may consist of two or more administrative units, for example, an elementary school and a junior high-school unit. The same city may have some three-year junior high and three-year senior high schools, and also one or more six-year junior-senior high schools. Recognizing these variations that exist within school systems, the questionnaire used in this study asked each city to report its "prevailing pattern," the administrative divisions typically used, and the grades commonly included in each division. Table 4 shows the percent of cities by city size and geographic region, which typically use each of five administrative divisions.

## TABLE 4.—EXTENT TO WHICH VARIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS ARE USED IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS

| Group | Percent of districts having each administrative division, as follows: | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Primary division[a] | Elementary division[a] | Junior high-school division[b] | Senior high-school division[c] | Junior college division[c] | Other[d] |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Over 100,000 | 9% | 99% | 78% | 99% | 19% | 1% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 11 | 99 | 72 | 92 | 12 | 8 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 18 | 100 | 62 | 91 | 9 | 9 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 20 | 100 | 46 | 80 | 4 | 20 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 22 | 100 | 40 | 78 | 4 | 22 |
| New England | 9 | 100 | 55 | 93 | 3 | 7 |
| Middle Atlantic | 16 | 100 | 52 | 75 | 1 | 25 |
| Southeast | 18 | 100 | 47 | 85 | 1 | 15 |
| Middle | 19 | 99 | 49 | 83 | 6 | 17 |
| Southwest | 26 | 100 | 61 | 91 | 9 | 9 |
| Northwest | 21 | 100 | 73 | 91 | 14 | 9 |
| Far West | 28 | 100 | 43 | 94 | 25 | 6 |
| All groups | 19% | 100% | 52% | 84% | 7% | 16% |
| Number of cities on which percents are based | 1,518[a] | 1,518[a] | 1,598[b] | 1,452[c] | 1,452[c] | 1,452[c] |

[a] Excludes 80 districts which operate secondary schools only.
[b] Includes all districts reporting, since junior high schools often exist in high-school and in elementary-school districts.
[c] Excludes 146 districts which operate elementary schools only.
[d] Includes chiefly the combined junior-senior high-school units, a few high-school junior-college units, and two twelve-year all-grade units.

The primary division is not yet widely used, but is reported most frequently by the smaller cities and by cities of the three western regions. The elementary school as an administrative division is used in virtually all cities. The prevalence of the junior high-school division decreases with size of city and, so far as regions are concerned, is most commonly found in the states of the Northwest area. The senior high school is also widely used as a separate administrative unit, a little less frequently in the smaller cities and in the Middle Atlantic states than elsewhere. The junior-college unit occurs with greatest frequency in the larger cities and in the cities of the Western regions.

### Grades Included in Each Division

More than half the school systems using the primary administrative unit include in it the kindergarten thru Grade III. About one-third more (lifting the total to 86 percent) omit the kindergarten and include Grades I thru III. Others include prekindergarten classes in the primary division and a few end the unit with Grade II or with Grade IV. By and large, however, the primary division takes the child from school entrance thru Grade III.

The grades most frequently included in the elementary-school unit are kindergarten thru Grade VI. Nearly a third of the cities report this arrangement as their prevailing practice. Next most frequent is the combination, Grades I thru VI, meaning that more than half the cities end their elementary-school period with Grade VI. Fewer than 5 percent end it with Grade VII, the remainder with Grade VIII. In cities which typically have a primary division, of course, the elementary unit begins with Grade IV (or occasionally with Grade III or Grade V) instead of with the pupils' entrance into school.

The combinations of grades reported for the junior high- and senior high-school divisions were as follows:

*Junior high-school division*

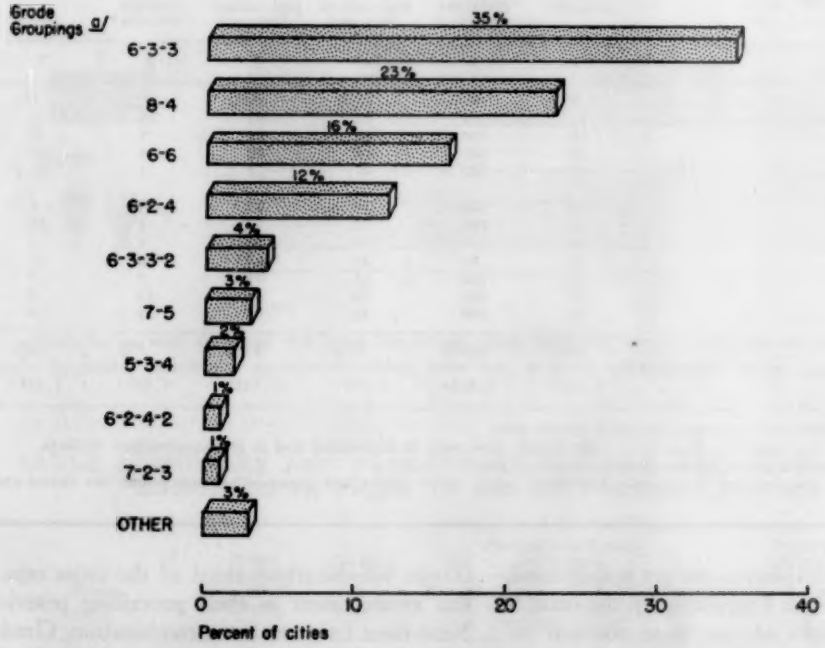
| *Grades* | *Number of cities* | *Percent* |
|---|---|---|
| VI thru VIII | 28 | 3% |
| VII and VIII | 222 | 27 |
| VII thru IX | 531 | 64 |
| VII thru X | 16 | 2 |
| VIII and IX | 15 | 2 |
| Others | 17 | 2 |

*Senior high-school division*

| *Grades* | *Number of cities* | *Percent* |
|---|---|---|
| VIII thru XI | 42 | 3% |
| IX thru XII | 620 | 51 |
| X thru XII | 548 | 45 |
| Others | 14 | 1 |

FIGURE II

## PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION IN USE IN 1372 CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS 1947-48




a/ It is not feasible here to differentiate between schools which do, and do not, include the kindergarten but otherwise are similar in organization. In each of these groups there are school systems with and without kindergartens. Trends with respect to the kindergarten unit are indicated in a later section.

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### TABLE 5.—PATTERN OF ORGANIZATION FOLLOWED IN 1372 SCHOOL SYSTEMS WHICH INCLUDE BOTH ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY GRADES

| Group | Pattern of organization (or grade groupings) followed | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 8-4 plan | 6-3-3 plan | 6-3-3-2 plan | 6-6 plan | 6-2-4 plan | 6-2-4-2 plan | 5-3-4 plan | 7-5 plan | 7-2-3 plan | Other plans |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| Over 100,000 | 16% | 55% | 15% | 0% | 2% | 2% | 0% | 3% | 1% | 6% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 16 | 39 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 21 | 43 | 5 | 8 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 26 | 28 | 1 | 20 | 15 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 27 | 23 | 1 | 24 | 15 | 1 | 3 | 3 | * | 3 |
| New England | 37 | 37 | 3 | 7 | 14 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Middle Atlantic | 21 | 42 | * | 25 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Southeast | 19 | 33 | 1 | 15 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 15 | 1 | 6 |
| Middle | 25 | 29 | 4 | 18 | 17 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Southwest | 26 | 38 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Northwest | 12 | 35 | 5 | 6 | 25 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Far West | 22 | 34 | 18 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 9 |
| All groups | 23% | 35% | 4% | 16% | 12% | 1% | 2% | 3% | 1% | 3% |
| Number of cases | 321 | 478 | 54 | 215 | 168 | 13 | 25 | 42 | 14 | 42 |

* Less than one-half of 1 percent.

The junior-college division in 95 percent of the cases includes Grades XIII and XIV. The few exceptions to this pattern are found in the schools that are moving toward the 6-4-4 plan.

## Patterns of Organization in 1372 Comprehensive Systems

More specific data are now presented with respect to the patterns of organization found in the city-school systems which include the total program of elementary-secondary education. In these cities the 6-3-3 plan of organization, with or without kindergarten, is used as the prevailing type more frequently than any other. Nevertheless, this plan is the prevailing type in only about one-third of the city systems. Next in frequency of use is the traditional 8-4 plan; then the 6-6 plan of organization.

Figure II indicates graphically the relative strength of all the leading plans for grade grouping. Nine different plans are charted, and the "other types" include several combinations of grades. This demonstrates rather clearly that variation and experimentation is still the order of the day in the matter of school organization and that as yet no single pattern has become the clearly dominant type.

Size of city seems to have a rather definite influence on organization pattern, for the 8-4, 6-6, and 6-2-4 plans are relatively more popular in the smaller cities and the 6-3-3 and 6-3-3-2 in the larger ones. Comparing the various regions, the 8-4 plan is reported by the highest percent of New England districts; the 6-3-3 and 6-6 plans by the highest percent of cities in the Middle Atlantic states; and the 6-2-4 plan by the highest percent of cities in the Northwest region. The percent of city-school systems in which each of these plans is the prevailing pattern is given, by city size and region, in Table 5.

## Patterns of Organization in Separate Elementary- and High-School Districts

The prevailing patterns of organization in the separate elementary- and separate high-school systems are shown in Tables 6 and 7. Table 6 indicates the types of schools most frequently operated by the 146 elementary-school systems; Table 7, the types operated by the eighty high-school districts. Eight-year elementary schools are the prevailing type in more than half of the separate elementary systems. Four-year high schools predominate in 77 percent of the separate high-school systems. Examination of the data by regions shows that: (a) most of the six-year elementary schools of the separate elementary systems are identified with the Far West, (b) the 6-2 plan in separate elementary districts is most common in the Middle states, and (c) the 6-3 plan is most common in the separate elementary districts of the Middle Atlantic region. For separate high-school districts, the combined high school-junior college plan is found only in the Far West except for a very few instances in the Middle states.

**TABLE 6.—PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION FOLLOWED IN 146 ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

| Organization plan | Elementary districts | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8-year schools | 82 | 56% |
| 6–2 plan | 27 | 19 |
| 6–3 plan | 16 | 11 |
| 6-year schools | 11 | 7 |
| Other | 10 | 7 |
| Total | 146 | 100% |

**TABLE 7.—PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION FOLLOWED IN EIGHTY HIGH-SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

| Organization plan | High-school districts | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4-year schools | 62 | 77% |
| 4–2 plan (high school and junior college) | 11 | 4 |
| Other | 7 | 9 |
| Total | 80 | 100% |

## The Junior High School, 1938 to 1948

If the cities cooperating in this investigation had made any change in the number of their junior high schools since 1938 they were asked to report: (a) the number of junior high schools in operation in 1937-38, (b) the number established since July 1938, and (c) the number abandoned since July 1938. From these data Table 8 has been compiled to indicate the trend, during the past ten years, with

**TABLE 8.—CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN OPERATION IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1938 TO 1948**

| Group | Number of cities reporting[a] | Percent reporting | | | Total net increase in number of junior high schools | Average net increase per city | Average net increase per city in which some change occurred, 1938 to 1948 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Same number 1938 and 1948 | A net increase | A net decrease | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Over 100,000 | 67 | 66%[b] | 24% | 10% | 5 | 0.07 | 0.22 |
| 30,000–99,999 | 164 | 82 | 14 | 4 | 21 | 0.13 | 0.72 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 383 | 91 | 9 | 0 | 46 | 0.12 | 1.35 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 457 | 89 | 9 | 2 | 37 | 0.08 | 0.74 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 527 | 92 | 6 | 2 | 25 | 0.05 | 0.56 |
| All groups | 1,598 | 89%[b] | 9% | 2% | 134 | 0.08 | 0.74 |

[a] All districts are included in this table because even those that operate only elementary schools, or only high schools, frequently include junior high-school administrative divisions.

[b] These percents should not be misinterpreted. They do NOT indicate the percent of cities having junior high schools either in 1938 or in 1948. Some had "none" either year—hence there was no change in the number.

respect to the rise or decline of the junior high school.

For the most part, the table indicates comparatively little change with respect to junior high schools, especially in the groups of smaller cities (see column 3). In the larger cities the number of junior high schools has fluctuated somewhat more than in the smaller ones; but no important net increase has occurred.

The average net increase in number of junior high schools, for the cities in each population group, has been approximately 0.1 school per city. In the 1598 city systems represented in Table 8 there are only 134 more junior high schools than existed ten years ago. When allowance is made for those undoubtedly established merely because of population growth in cities already having the junior high-school unit, it is apparent that the number of school systems changing from the traditional elementary-secondary plan to a pattern of elementary, junior high, and senior high schools has been relatively small.

## Kindergartens and Prekindergarten Units

During the war years considerable impetus was given to the provision of school opportunities for children too young to enter the regular primary grades. These schools for young children differed in name, in program, and in the age groups served. In addition to kindergartens there were the prekindergartens, nursery schools, child-care centers, and so on. The excellent results achieved in such schools convinced many educational leaders that the school program ought to be extended downward to make such facilities regularly available to young children, at least on an optional or voluntary attendance basis. This study does not explore the merits or achievements of preprimary units, but does indicate the extent to which city schools are incorporating them into their programs and something as to current trends in this area of education.

Among the largest cities, 84 percent have at least one or more kindergartens—whether or not they provide them for all the children seeking admission to them. The percent drops with size of city to a bare majority of 53 percent in the smallest cities, and for all the cities reporting, it is 59 percent. Some rather striking regional differences also are found, as Table 9 reveals. The highest percent that operate kindergartens is identified with the cities of the Far West; the lowest percents, with cities of the Southeast and Southwest regions, respectively. In the cities of all sizes and all regions the percent having any type of prekindergarten program is quite small.

During the ten years 1938 to 1948 there was a substantial net increase in the number of kindergartens. Specifically, for 1518 city systems there were 1864 more kindergartens in 1948 than in 1938, or an average net increase of 1.23 per city. The percent of cities in which the number of kindergartens has shown a net increase during the past decade—in many cases an increase from zero to the present number—is highest for cities over 100,000 in population. Table 10 indicates the nature and extent of the change for cities of various sizes. Note that the percents in column

## TABLE 9.—PERCENT OF CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS OPERATING KINDERGARTENS AND PREKINDERGARTENS IN 1947–48

| Group | Number of districts reporting[a] | Percent that in 1947-48 were operating one or more | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Kindergartens | Prekindergartens |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Over 100,000 | 67 | 84% | 2% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 161 | 62 | 1 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 368 | 64 | 3 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 430 | 55 | 2 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 492 | 53 | 2 |
| New England | 116 | 60 | 2 |
| Middle Atlantic | 372 | 68 | 2 |
| Southeast | 152 | 9 | 0 |
| Middle | 539 | 70 | 4 |
| Southwest | 116 | 16 | 2 |
| Northwest | 108 | 63 | 2 |
| Far West | 115 | 80 | 0 |
| All groups | 1,518[a] | 59% | 2% |

[a] Excludes the 80 districts which operate high schools only.

## TABLE 10.—CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF KINDERGARTENS IN OPERATION IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1938 TO 1948

| Group | Number of cities reporting[a] | Percent reporting | | | Total net increase in number of kindergartens | Average net increase per city | Average net increase *per city in which some change occurred*, 1938 to 1948 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Same number 1938 and 1948 | A net increase | A net decrease | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Over 100,000 | 67 | 39%[b] | 51% | 10% | 677 | 10.10 | 16.51 |
| 30,000–99,999 | 161 | 70 | 27 | 3 | 312 | 1.94 | 6.50 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 367 | 64 | 35 | 1 | 462 | 1.26 | 3.50 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 431 | 68 | 29 | 3 | 216 | 0.50 | 1.58 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 492 | 75 | 24 | 1 | 197 | 0.40 | 1.58 |
| All groups | 1,518 | 68%[b] | 30% | 2% | 1,864 | 1.23 | 3.86 |

[a] Excludes the 80 districts which operate high schools only.

[b] These percents should not be misinterpreted. They do NOT indicate the percent of cities having kindergartens either in 1938 or 1948. Some had "none" either year—hence there was no change in the number. Refer to Table 9, column 3, for the percent of cities having kindergartens in 1948.

4 are consistently much larger than those in column 5. Also, the average net increase *per city in which some change has occurred* (column 8) gives specific evidence of substantial growth in the number of kindergarten units. This development has been more rapid in the larger cities.

Nursery schools and child-care centers are found with greater relative frequency in the larger cities, as is shown in Table 11. Approximately 4 out of 5 of all such units have been established since 1938. The reports indicate that both types of programs are now being curtailed in a majority of the cities that have them, with greatest relative frequency in cities above 10,000 in population. To the extent that these data are representative of the various regions, the highest percent of the cities which have nursery schools and child-care centers and in which this segment of the school program still was being expanded as of January 1948 is found in the Southwest region. The highest percents which in 1948 were curtailing their programs are identified with the cities of the Far West and New England states, respectively.

### Junior Colleges

Another trend in public education which is being watched with interest is extension of the program upward to include the junior college or thirteenth and fourteenth grades. This segment of the program is not yet well established, as Table 12 reveals, but is relatively strongest in the largest cities and in cities of the Far West and Northwest regions.

The slow, but positive expansion of the

public-school two-year college movement since 1938 is indicated in Table 13, which is similar in origin and style to Tables 8 and 10 on the ten-year trend with respect to junior high schools and kindergartens, respectively. In the cities reporting, the net increase since 1938 in the number of public two-year colleges, or thirteenth- and fourteenth-grade programs, has been nineteen.

### Veterans' Education

More than 10 percent of the city-school systems covered by this study have recently established separate high-school departments to provide for the veterans of World War II who had not completed their high-school education. Altogether, 186 cities reported having such separate departments for veterans. The percents are much higher, as Table 14 shows, in cities over 100,000 in population than in the smaller cities—as the larger numbers seeking readmission to high school in the larger cities would lead one to expect.

### Relation of Organization to Program

Administrative units and grade groupings should never become the goals or ends in educational planning. Yet the pattern of school organization is important and can either facilitate or retard progress toward valid goals. The patterns of organization which are summarized here reflect experimentation in many areas and the extension of school opportunities both upward and downward to meet new educational needs. The trends that have occurred over the past decade may provide direction to some, and reassurance to others, as they plan for the years immediately ahead.

**TABLE 11.—CURRENT TRENDS WITH RESPECT TO NURSERY SCHOOLS AND CHILD-CARE CENTERS**

| Group | Number of cities reporting[a] | Percent which in 1947-48 were operating | | Percent having nursery schools which report that the program is being | | Percent having child-care centers which report that the program is being | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Nursery schools | Child-care centers | Expanded | Curtailed | Expanded | Curtailed |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Over 100,000 | 67 | 34% | 42% | 9% | 78% | 4% | 93% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 161 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 56 | 28 | 64 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 367 | 11 | 9 | 28 | 56 | 21 | 61 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 431 | 7 | 6 | 53 | 34 | 37 | 48 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 492 | 6 | 6 | 34 | 41 | 63 | 22 |
| All groups | 1,518 | 11% | 10% | 30% | 52% | 31% | 57% |

[a] Excludes the 80 districts which operate high schools only.

**TABLE 12.—NUMBER AND PERCENT OF DISTRICTS THAT OPERATE JUNIOR COLLEGES OR GRADES XIII AND XIV**

| Group | Number of districts reporting[a] | Number having junior colleges | Percent having junior colleges |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Over 100,000 | 67 | 13 | 19% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 156 | 21 | 14 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 354 | 33 | 9 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 419 | 20 | 5 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 456 | 18 | 4 |
| New England | 114 | 3 | 3 |
| Middle Atlantic | 342 | 4 | 1 |
| Southeast | 142 | 2 | 1 |
| Middle | 523 | 37 | 7 |
| Southwest | 116 | 12 | 10 |
| Northwest | 108 | 16 | 15 |
| Far West | 107 | 31 | 29 |
| Total | 1,452[a] | 105 | 7% |

[a] Excludes 146 districts which operate elementary schools only.

## TABLE 13.—CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF JUNIOR COLLEGES, OR THIRTEENTH- AND FOURTEENTH-GRADE PROGRAMS, 1938 TO 1948

| Group | Number of cities reporting[a] | Percent reporting | | | Total net increase in number of junior colleges | Average net increase per city | Average net increase *per city in which some change has occurred*, 1938 to 1948 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Same number 1938 and 1948 | A net increase | A net decrease | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Over 100,000 | 67 | 96%[b] | 3% | 1% | 2 | 0.03 | 0.67 |
| 30,000–99,999 | 156 | 95 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 0.04 | 0.75 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 354 | 96 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 0.03 | 0.69 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 419 | 97 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0.005 | 0.17 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 456 | 98 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| All groups | 1,452[a] | 97%[b] | 2% | 1% | 19 | 0.01 | 0.43 |

[a] Excludes the 146 districts which operate elementary schools only.

[b] These percents should not be misinterpreted. The great majority had no junior colleges in 1938 and none in 1948—hence, there was no change. Refer to Table 12, column 4, for the percent of cities having junior colleges in 1948.

## TABLE 14.—NUMBER AND PERCENT OF CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS OPERATING SEPARATE HIGH-SCHOOL DEPARTMENTS FOR VETERANS, 1947–48

| Group | Number of cities reporting[a] | Operating separate high-school departments for veterans | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number | Percent |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Over 100,000 | 67 | 36 | 54% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 156 | 26 | 17 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 354 | 43 | 12 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 419 | 32 | 8 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 456 | 49 | 11 |
| All groups | 1,452 | 186 | 13% |

[a] Excludes the 146 districts which operate elementary schools only.

## III. Organization Policies and Practices

This section of the bulletin is concerned with nine selected policies or practices which have important bearing upon the organization of schools. This does not imply that these are the only significant policies; but the adoption or rejection of any one in this group in a given school system necessarily affects the pattern of its internal organization.

For the most part, the data are presented by city size, but regional differences are pointed out in the text when the tabulations by regions indicate that marked variations do exist. This section of the report does not compare practices in 1948 with those of 1938, but instead indicates the proportion of city-school systems in which each practice is in use, as reported in January 1948. The data also indicate, for the cities that use each practice, the proportion in which each one of them is reported as being "on the way IN" and "on the way OUT," respectively.

### Departmentalization in Elementary Grades

A bare majority of 51 percent of the cities report that departmentalization is practiced in one or more elementary grades in one or more schools in the city system. The percents differ only slightly by city size.

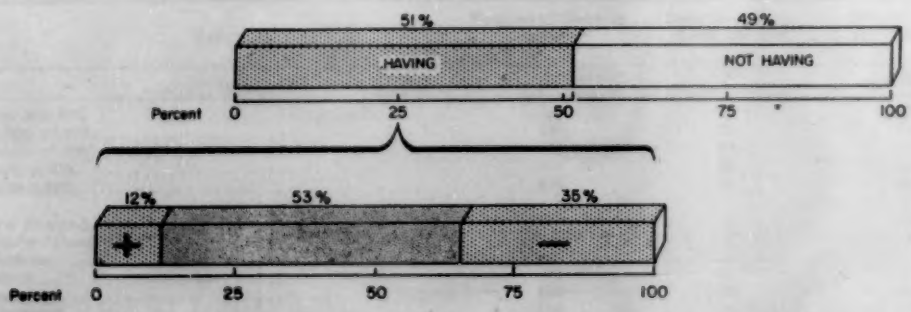
| *Group* | *Percent of cities having some departmentalized grades in one or more elementary schools* |
|---|---|
| Over 100,000 | 59% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 57 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 47 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 53 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 51 |

Among the school systems in which departmentalization is practiced in at least some elementary classes, however, considerably higher percents report that the practice is "on the way OUT" than report that it is "on the way IN."

Figure III, which shows these essential facts graphically, sets the pattern for other figures in this section. The shaded portion of the upper bar indicates, as stated above, that departmentalization in some elementary classrooms is found in 51 percent of all the cities reporting. Then, on the lower bar, the shaded portion on the left indicates that 12 percent of the cities which use departmentalization report that it is "on the way IN." The shaded portion on the right shows the 35 percent reporting that departmentalization is "on the way OUT." The center portion of the bar represents the 53 percent where no particular change in the popularity of departmentalized classes has been noted—where the plan seems

FIGURE III

DEPARTMENTALIZATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF CITY SYSTEMS, 1947-48




Read chart as follows: Departmentalization is in use in one or more elementary schools in 51 percent of the cities reporting. Among those using the plan, 12 percent report that it is "on the way IN"; 35 percent, that it is "on the way OUT."

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to be neither on the way IN nor on the way OUT, but merely keeping whatever place it has gained for itself in the pattern of school organization.

## Ability Grouping

The much debated practice of grouping pupils according to ability is in use in one or more schools in a majority of the cities reached by this study. Fifty-three percent make some use of ability grouping, the percents, again, running quite definitely according to city size.

| *Group* | *Percent of cities using ability grouping in one or more schools* |
|---|---|
| Over 100,000 | 72% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 61 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 61 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 52 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 44 |

In four of the geographic regions used in these analyses the percents making some use of ability grouping ranged between 66 and 58 percent, namely, in the Far West, New England, Middle Atlantic, and Southwest regions —beginning with the region having the highest percent and naming them in order. Less than half the cities in the three remaining regions reported any use of ability grouping—45 to 47 percent.

Figure IV indicates that ability grouping is reported as "on the way IN" just about as often as "on the way OUT," and that in about half the cities in which it is in use, no particular trend in either direction has become apparent.

The trend is slightly toward ability grouping in the cities below 30,000 in population and away from it in the larger cities.

## Platoon Organization

Only 8 percent of the cities report that one or more of their schools is now organized on the platoon plan. However, the percent rises consistently with size of city from almost none of the smallest cities to nearly a third of the largest group. By city size the percents are:

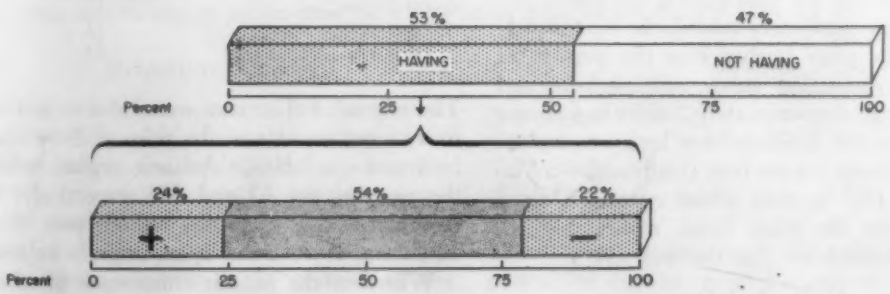
| *Group* | *Percent of cities having one or more platoon schools* |
|---|---|
| Over 100,000 | 31% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 14 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 9 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 6 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 4 |

Altho the platoon plan is most frequently used in the larger cities, it is also from the larger cities that come the highest percent of replies saying that platoon organization is "on the way OUT" in their respective school systems.

Figure V, set in the same pattern as Figure III, gives the graphic picture of the current trend with respect to platoon organization.

FIGURE IV

ABILITY GROUPING IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1947-48




Read chart as follows: Ability grouping is practiced in one or more schools in 53 percent of the cities reporting. Among those using the plan, 24 percent report that it is "on the way IN"; 22 percent, that it is "on the way OUT."

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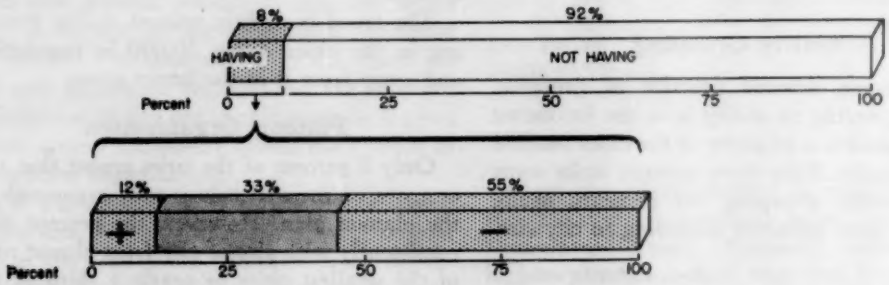
FIGURE V

## PLATOON ORGANIZATION IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1947-48




Read chart as follows: One or more platoon schools is found in 8 percent of the cities reporting. Among those using the plan, 12 percent report that it is "on the way IN"; 55 percent, that it is "on the way OUT."

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### Elimination of Grade Lines

Classification of pupils into broader school units, or divisions, instead of into the traditional grades was reported as being used in one or more schools in 17 percent of the city-school systems included in this study. The range in percents according to city size was relatively narrow in this instance, but the percents were somewhat higher for the larger cities.

| *Group* | *Percent of cities using divisions to replace certain grades in one or more schools* |
|---|---|
| Over 100,000 | 24% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 24 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 19 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 14 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 13 |

Wherever grade lines have begun to be eliminated, for the most part in the lower portion of the elementary school, the tendency to extend the plan farther into the pattern of school organization seems quite definite and pronounced. Approximately 3 cities in 4 among those in which divisions have begun to replace certain grades report that this practice is "on the way IN" in their school systems. Only 8 percent, on the other hand, report that the broad divisions are "on the way OUT."

### Ungraded Classes

A device in school organization, which has been used quite largely to provide special opportunities for exceptional children, is the ungraded classroom. The great majority of such classes have been maintained for slow-learning pupils and often they have been known as "opportunity rooms." In rare instances gifted children also have been classified in ungraded classrooms for enriched programs of study adapted to their special interests and abilities. In this survey of practice, in which no distinction was attempted between the two types of ungraded classrooms, 43 percent of the cities reported the existence of one or more such classes in 1947-48. Here the range is quite wide for cities of various sizes, the percents falling rapidly from one population group to the next.

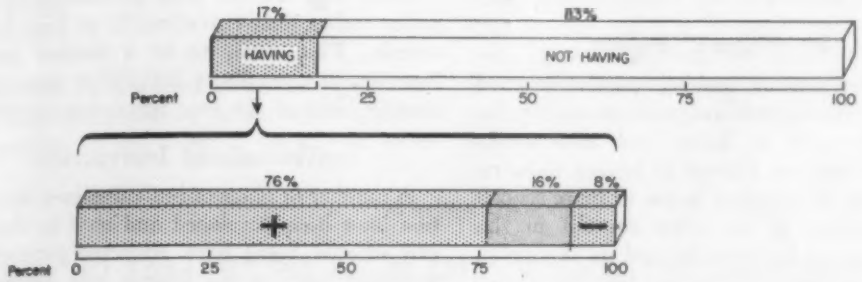
| *Group* | *Percent of cities having one or more ungraded classes* |
|---|---|
| Over 100,000 | 91% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 79 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 57 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 35 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 23 |

The ungraded classroom seems also to be relatively more popular in the cities of New England and the Middle Atlantic region, where the percents are 63 and 51, respectively. In each of the five remaining regions only 30 to 40 percent of the cities report ungraded classes.

Wherever the present framework of school organization includes ungraded classes, the trend seems definitely toward greater use of this arrangement. Figure VII indicates the strength of this trend.

FIGURE VI

## CLASSIFICATION OF PUPILS BY DIVISIONS, RATHER THAN BY GRADES, IN CITY SYSTEMS, 1947-48




Read chart as follows: At least part of the pupils in one or more schools are classified by divisions instead of by the traditional one-year grades in 17 percent of the cities reporting. Among those using the plan, 76 percent report that it is "on the way IN"; 8 percent, that it is "on the way OUT."

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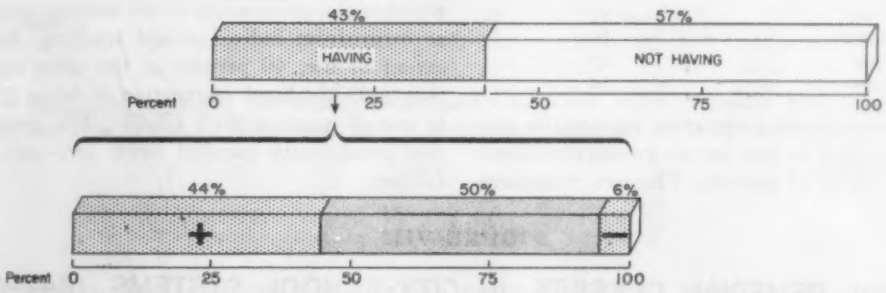
FIGURE VII

## UNGRADED CLASSES IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1947-48




Read chart as follows: There are ungraded classes in one or more schools in 43 percent of the cities reporting. Among those using the plan, 44 percent report that it is "on the way IN"; 6 percent, that it is "on the way OUT."

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### Remedial Classes

Groups classified separately for remedial instruction, particularly in such foundation subjects as reading and arithmetic, but sometimes for other types of remedial instruction, are widely but by no means universally used. Remedial classes in one or more schools of the system were reported by 58 percent of the cooperating cities, the percents for cities of the different groups reflecting more extensive use of the plan in cities above 10,000 in population than in the smaller cities.

| *Group* | *Percent of cities having one or more remedial classes* |
|---|---|
| Over 100,000 | 85% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 70 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 64 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 51 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 52 |

From 60 to 74 percent of the cities in three geographic regions report the use of remedial classes—the Far West (highest), New England, and the Southwest regions. The lowest proportion of cities to report the use of remedial classes is 48 percent for city systems in the

Southeastern area. For other regions all the percents are between 50 and 60—close to that for all groups combined.

The trend toward wider use of remedial classes, which Figure VIII depicts, seems quite strong and definite.

## "No Failure" Policy

The practice of moving pupils forward each year from grade to grade, providing for their differences in ability and achievement wherever they are instead of having them repeat grades, is followed in one or more schools in 17 percent of the cities covered in this study. Interest has been focused on this policy recently by the court action brought during 1948 in one of the nation's largest cities in an attempt to force the superintendent and schoolboard to abandon the "no failure" plan. Altho this administrative practice is reported somewhat more often in cities of the largest size, the percents show no consistent relationship to the population groups.

| *Group* | *Percent making some use of the "no failure" policy* |
|---|---|
| Over 100,000 | 27% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 17 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 19 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 13 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 16 |

For most of the geographic regions the percents are close to that for all groups combined, namely, 14 to 17 percent. The two exceptions are: (a) New England, where the "no failure" policy is found in only 9 percent of the cities; and (b) the Far West, where 28 percent of the cities make some use of the automatic advancement or "no failure" plan.

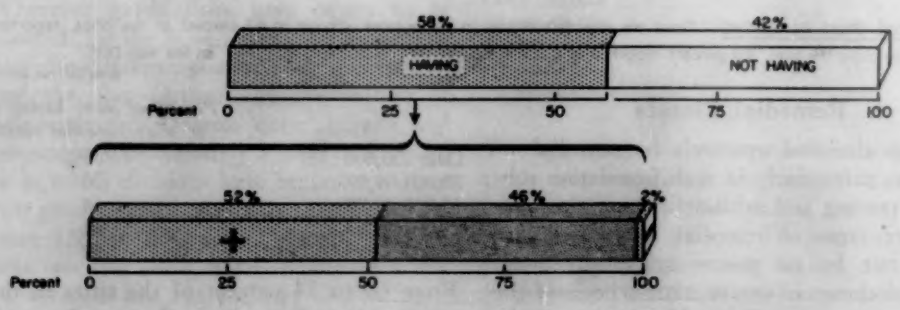
Cities that use the plan are extending the policy rather than curtailing it, as Figure IX reveals. This seems to be a weaker trend, however, in cities above 100,000 in population than in cities of the four remaining groups.

## Individualized Instruction

A number of plans of individualized instruction have been developed and used in American schools. Some have attracted nationwide attention, such as the Dalton and Winnetka plans. Others have gone virtually unnoticed except locally, but nonetheless have incorporated the essential elements of individualized instruction in which each pupil more or less independently pursues his own "project" or works on his own "contract" for at least part of the school day. Without attempting to distinguish among the various plans in use, this study shows only the extent to which some type of individualized instruction is used, and whether the cities using it are moving toward or away from individualized teaching. As to extent of use, 40 percent of the cities report that individualized instruction is being given in one or more of their schools. The percents run consistently parallel with city size, as follows:

**FIGURE VIII**

**SPECIAL REMEDIAL CLASSES IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1947-48**




Read chart as follows: There are remedial classes in one or more schools in 58 percent of the cities reporting. Among those using the plan, 52 percent report that it is "on the way IN"; 2 percent, that it is "on the way OUT."

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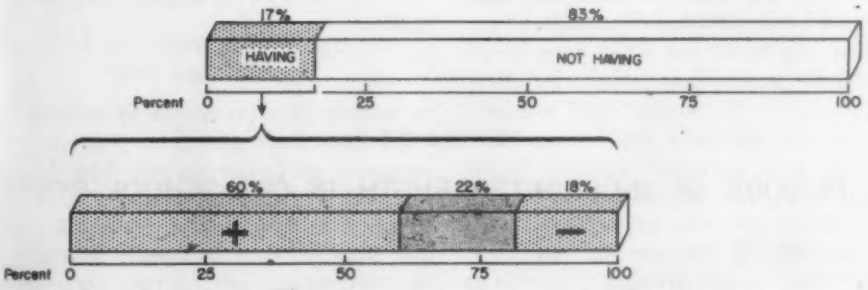
| *Group* | *Percent of cities having some individualized instruction in one or more schools* |
|---|---|
| Over 100,000 | 57% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 53 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 41 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 40 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 34 |

Regional comparisons of the data show that individualized plans are in operation in 35 to 45 percent of the cities in six of the seven regions. The one exception is the Southwest region, where more than half the cities report that individualized instruction is given in one or more of their respective schools.

Figure X indicates that the trend toward more individualized instruction in the cities that already use it is relatively strong. Moreover, from tabulations not presented here, it seems that the relative popularity of individualized instruction increases somewhat with size of city.

FIGURE IX

## THE "NO FAILURE" POLICY IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1947-48




**Read chart as follows:** The "no failure" policy is used in one or more schools in 17 percent of the cities reporting. Among those using the plan, 60 percent report that it is "on the way IN"; 18 percent, that it is "on the way OUT."

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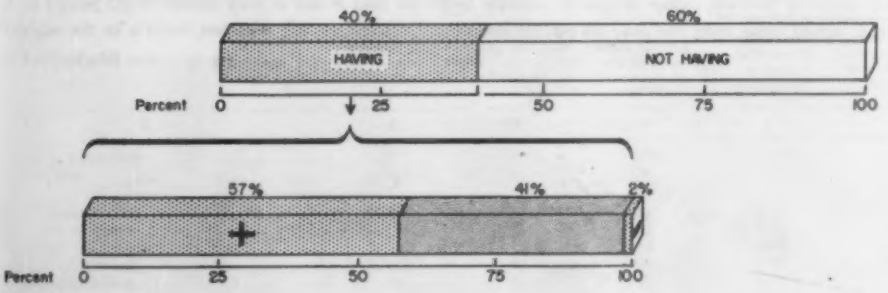
FIGURE X

## INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1947-48




**Read chart as follows:** Individualized instruction is given in one or more schools in 40 percent of the cities reporting. Among those using the plan, 57 percent report that it is "on the way IN"; 2 percent, that it is "on the way OUT."

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## Class Periods of Indefinite Length

In recent years many schools have tried to abandon their traditional fixed periods of so many minutes each, substituting for this fixed-period schedule a flexible arrangement which at all times is subject to the teacher's control. Especially in classrooms that are not units of a departmentalized school, there have been many experiments with flexible schedules in which the periods are of indefinite length and vary from day to day. According to the reports received in this study, 1 city in 5 has one or more schools in which such schedules have replaced the fixed-period type. The percents are considerably higher for cities above 30,000 in population than for the smaller cities, yet are surprisingly close for the groups that fall above and below that division line.

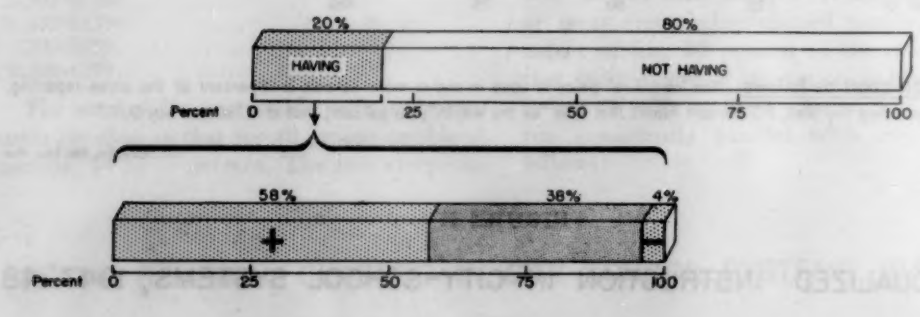
| *Group* | *Percent of cities having class periods of indefinite length in one or more schools* |
|---|---|
| Over 100,000 | 32% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 33 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 20 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 17 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 17 |

Among the cities that are using flexible class periods in at least some of their schools, the prevailing trend is toward further use of such schedules. Figure XI indicates this fact.

The trend toward further use of flexible periods, as well as toward introducing them, is stronger for cities over 30,000 in population than for the three groups of smaller city systems.

**FIGURE XI**

**CLASS PERIODS OF INDEFINITE LENGTH IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1947-48**




Read chart as follows: Class periods of indefinite length are used in one or more schools in 20 percent of the cities reporting. Among those using the plan, 58 percent report that it is "on the way IN"; 4 percent, that it is "on the way OUT."

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# IV. Special Programs and Services That Affect School Organization

The number of school services provided and the extent to which each service permeates the entire school system are important considerations in the development of an organization plan. Selected school services and some of the more or less special segments of the education program are therefore brought into focus in this section of the bulletin. Data are presented to answer such questions as: How do present provisions compare with those a decade earlier? In the cities providing these services, are the programs, generally speaking, being further expanded or curtailed? and, How do the trends compare for cities of various sizes and in the cities of various geographic regions?

## Selected Services and Programs 1948 and 1938

An overview of eleven types of services or special programs, comparing their availability in 1947-48 with the corresponding provisions in 1937-38, is given in Table 15.[1] In this table the items are listed according to the number and percent of cities that reported each provision as being part of their respective programs in 1947-48. Columns 4, 5, and 6 indicate the extent to which each service or program is a product of the past decade, and something as to how rapidly the service has penetrated into new school systems during the ten-year period just ended.

Audio-visual education and library service are the only two items reported as available in 1948 by more than three-fourths of the respondents. For the next five items the proportions fall between one-half and three-fourths. Adult education, work experience, and summer sessions are provided by a minority of city systems, and school operated camps by only 3 percent of those reporting. The largest gains, as reflected by the differences between the percents of school districts providing each service in 1948 and in 1938 (column 5), relate to audio-visual education, guidance, and the school lunch program. The services which in more than half the cities that now have them are newly established, that is, have been introduced since 1938, are school operated camps, work experience, audio-visual education, and guidance departments.

Almost without exception the percent of the school districts reporting each provision is highest for the largest cities and the percents drop by successive steps for the smaller ones. Sometimes the amount of difference is relatively slight, as in the case of audio-visual education; at other times the differences are quite large, as in the case of adult education, work experience, and summer sessions. In addition to these variations, which can be noted in Table 16, two exceptions to the general trend are apparent. First, the percent of cities hav-

[1] Nursery schools and child-care centers might appropriately be classed with the special services and programs with which this section deals. Trends with respect to these programs, however, have already been covered in Section II of this bulletin. See p. 12–13.

**TABLE 15.—PROVISION OF SELECTED SPECIAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS IN 1598 CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1948 AND 1938**

| Special service or program | School systems having the service or program, 1947-48 | | Percent of school systems having service or program in 1937-38 | Difference in percent (column 3 minus column 4) | Percent of districts now having service that established it since 1938 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Audio-visual education | 1,429 | 89% | 37% | +52% | 58% |
| Library service | 1,346 | 84 | 71 | +13 | 16 |
| Guidance department | 1,188 | 74 | 34 | +40 | 55 |
| School lunch program | 1,174 | 73 | 38 | +35 | 48 |
| School health department | 1,149 | 72 | 54 | +18 | 25 |
| Recreation department | 1,032 | 65 | 38 | +27 | 41 |
| School transportation | 936 | 59 | 42 | +17 | 29 |
| Department of adult education | 702 | 44 | 25 | +19 | 44 |
| Work-experience program | 588 | 37 | 8 | +29 | 78 |
| Summer sessions | 459 | 29 | 19 | +10 | 34 |
| School operated camps | 45 | 3 | * | +3 | 84 |

* Less than one-half of 1 percent.

ing recreation departments is smallest for cities over 100,000 in population, probably because in the largest cities the recreation program is often a cooperative one, carried out under the administrative control of a separate recreation department of the city government. The second exception relates to school transportation. Here the highest percents are identified with the two extreme groups, the largest and the smallest cities. In the former, transportation of some of the pupils to special schools far from their homes often seems quite necessary. In cities between 2500 and 5000 in population the transportation system very likely reaches out into the adjacent rural areas, bringing the pupils into consolidated schools.

Only a few regional variations will be pointed out—those in which the percents having each provision are materially higher or lower than those for other regions. The first such deviation pertains to guidance departments in cities of the Southeastern states. Only 59 percent of the cities of this region reported that they maintain guidance departments, which is from 9 to 24 percent lower than that for any other region and 15 percent below that for all cities cooperating in the study. The same type of variation again appears, with the lowest percents found in the cities of the Southeastern region, in the case of school health departments, school transportation, and departments of adult education. Undoubtedly the absence of these provisions in so many of the cities along the South Atlantic seaboard reflects the economic handicaps under which they operate and the need for federal financial assistance in equalizing educational opportunity. For some reason, not indicated by the data of this study, only a negligible percent of New England cities operate summer sessions—6 percent, as contrasted with 20 to 50 percent in each of the other regions and 29 percent for all the cities reporting.

Turning now to the regions showing the highest percents, the Far West takes the lead for audio-visual education, library service, the school lunch program, recreation departments, school transportation, departments of adult education, and school operated camps. The highest percent of cities which reported guidance departments and school health departments are in the Middle Atlantic region. Work experience is found in the highest percent of cities in the states of the Northwest region.

## Expansion or Curtailment of Special Services and Programs

Without exception every service and special program which is included here is being expanded and developed further, in the cities which have it, much more often than the service or program is being curtailed. In some cities, of course, no significant change in status is apparent, but rather the service or program is going forward at the attained level, however adequate or inadequate that may be. Figure XII shows the percent of cities that are expanding each service, the percent curtailing it, and the percent in which no change in status is now in progress. The two items having what might be paraphrased the "highest coefficient of expansion" are audio-visual education and guidance departments. Lowest on this scale, and likewise being curtailed in the highest percent of cases, is summer sessions.

**TABLE 16.—PERCENT OF CITIES OF EACH SIZE WHICH PROVIDED SELECTED SPECIAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS, 1947–48**

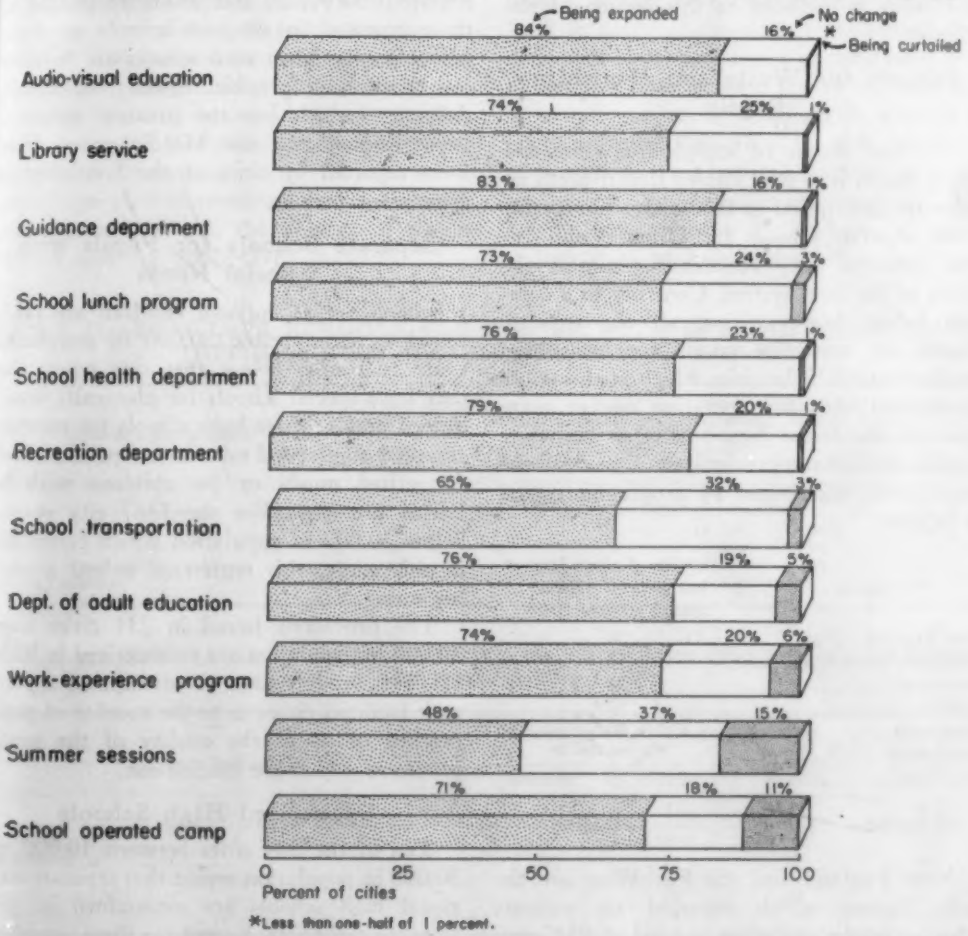
| Special service or program | Percent of cities providing service or program | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All groups | Over 100,000 | 30,000–99,999 | 10,000–29,999 | 5,000–9,999 | 2,500–4,999 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Audio-visual education | 89% | 97% | 95% | 89% | 88% | 88% |
| Library service | 84 | 96 | 93 | 88 | 83 | 79 |
| Guidance department | 74 | 93 | 91 | 80 | 71 | 66 |
| School lunch program | 73 | 90 | 79 | 74 | 69 | 73 |
| School health department | 72 | 85 | 90 | 79 | 70 | 60 |
| Recreation department | 65 | 57 | 70 | 68 | 63 | 63 |
| School transportation | 59 | 68 | 51 | 53 | 53 | 69 |
| Department of adult education | 44 | 85 | 73 | 53 | 36 | 30 |
| Work-experience program | 37 | 63 | 52 | 46 | 33 | 25 |
| Summer sessions | 29 | 72 | 59 | 38 | 22 | 13 |
| School operated camps | 3 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 |

The facts presented in this section should not lead to the inference that the various services and programs are adequate and wholly satisfactory in the cities that provide them. For example, the fact that *some kind of formal program of audio-visual education is being carried out in 89 percent of the cities,* as is shown in column 3 of Table 15, does not mean either that audio-visual education is being used in all the schools of these cities or, indeed, that it is being used effectively in any school. For this and every other item the scope and quality of the programs of the various cities undoubtedly run the entire gamut from the most meager and ineffective beginnings to fully developed and effective programs that serve all the children.

This suggests still another important fact to be kept in mind when interpreting the percents relating to the expansion and curtailment of programs. One city with a fully developed service of some type may be curtailing that program to some extent, yet may continue to maintain the service at a much higher level than some other school system which is in the process of expanding a very meager program. For that reason only the *direction* of current trends is suggested by these analyses—not the net result of the changes as reflected in the scope and quality of educational service.

**FIGURE XII**

EXPANSION AND CURTAILMENT OF SELECTED SPECIAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS IN THE CITIES NOW PROVIDING THEM - 1948




*Less than one-half of 1 percent.

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# V. Schools of Special Types

The most common basis for the segregation of pupils into separate schools is that of race—schools for white pupils, and separate schools for nonwhites. However, there are other bases of segregation as well: sex, special needs and abilities, and even the central purposes which govern the curriculum. In this study the inquiry about special schools was limited to facts about the special schools that were being operated in 1948. The result, therefore, is a summary of the status of special schools rather than of the trend with respect to their establishment, or discontinuance.

From one point of view the release of pupils from the regularly scheduled activities of the public school for the purpose of religious instruction is an idea closely related to the operation of special schools. For this reason that topic, also, is included in this section of the bulletin.

## Schools for White and Nonwhite Pupils

The dual system of schools for white and Negro pupils is so well known that it needs no elaborate description in this study. Except for a few separate schools for Oriental and Indian children, they account for almost the whole of the dual system. Contrary to a common belief, however, not all the separate schools for nonwhite pupils are located in Southern states. The cities which in this study report that they are operating one or more separate schools for Negro or other nonwhite pupils constitute approximately 1 in 5 of the total group, distributed by geographic region as follows:

| *Region* | *Number of cities having one or more separate schools for nonwhites* |
|---|---|
| New England | 0 |
| Middle Atlantic | 17 |
| Southeast | 134 |
| Middle | 52 |
| Southwest | 90 |
| Northwest | 9 |
| Far West | 0 |
| All regions | 302 cities |

New England and the Far West are the only regions which reported no separate schools. In the 302 cities, a total of 952 separate schools for nonwhite pupils enrol approximately 400,000 pupils. Of these, 72 percent are elementary and 28 percent are high-school pupils. This ratio is quite close to the corresponding division of elementary- and high-school pupils in the total enrolment for city schools.

## Separate Schools for Boys and Girls

Virtually all the separate schools for boys and for girls are found in the two groups of largest cities, and indeed most of them in the cities over 100,000 in population. Only twenty cities report separate schools for boys, and only fifteen cities, for the most part the same ones, report separate schools for girls. Typically the schools are quite large and operate at the high-school level. The average enrolment is nearly 1000 pupils, and about 95 percent of those enrolled in all such schools are high-school pupils. Most such schools are found in one of three geographic regions: the Middle Atlantic (which has the greatest number), New England, or the Middle states. None were reported by cities of the Southwest or Northwest regions.

## Separate Schools for Pupils with Special Needs

Schools for exceptional children are rarely found in cities below 30,000 in population. Only two cities below that size report that they have special schools for physically handicapped pupils; three have schools for mentally retarded pupils; and none have separate schools for gifted pupils or for children with behavior problems. For the 1367 city systems below 30,000 in population which cooperated in this study, this represents indeed a small beginning.

The provisions found in 231 cities above 30,000 in population are summarized in Table 17. This study makes no attempt to appraise such facilities either as to the number of pupils reached or as to the quality of the special programs which are carried out.

## Specialized High Schools

Ten of the 384 cities between 10,000 and 30,000 in population report that separate vocational high schools are maintained in their respective districts. Except for these vocational

schools, one continuation high school, and one technical high school, no other specialized high schools were reported by any of the cities of this study below 30,000 in population.

For cities over 30,000 in population, high schools that specialize along some particular line are not uncommon, tho the total number of such schools is less than 10 percent of the total. Table 18 shows for cities over 30,000 in population the number and percent of school systems in which there are various kinds of specialized high schools, the total number of such schools in the cities reporting, and their average enrolments.

## Released Time for Religious Instruction

The recent decision of the United States Supreme Court, which forced the discontinuance of one program of released time, resulted in nationwide discussion of the legal status of other plans and, indirectly, focused renewed attention on the whole problem of weekday religious education. This study provides no information as to how any plan operates, or as to the merits or legal status of any plan. It indicates only the extent to which some plan of released time was in operation during 1947-48, the number of pupils affected, and the grade levels involved.

Table 19 shows, by city size and region, the number and percent of cities which in 1948 were releasing certain pupils for weekday religious instruction. Exactly half the cities over 100,000 report released-time programs as compared with approximately one-third of the cities in each of the other groups. Among the geographic areas, the highest percents are identified with the Middle Atlantic and Far West regions; the smallest, with the cities of the Southeast and Southwest regions.

Cities having released-time plans in 1947-48 were asked to report, whenever possible, both the number of pupils involved in such plans during 1948 and the comparable numbers affected by released-time programs during the year 1937-38. Of the 516 cities included in Table 19, reports for both years on the number of pupils affected are available from 440 cities, or about 85 percent of them. It should be kept in mind, of course, that the number for 1938 in many of the cities was "zero," since their plans were established at some later date. With these facts in mind it may be noted that in round numbers 390,000 pupils were being released during 1947-48 in the 440 cities from which reports were received, an increase of 323 percent over the corresponding total of 92,200 for the same cities in 1938—many of which at that time had no released-time programs.

TABLE 17.—SEPARATE SCHOOLS FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN 231 CITIES ABOVE 30,000 IN POPULATION, 1947–48

| Type of separate school | Number of cities providing special schools | | Total number of special schools | Total enrolment in special schools | Percent of the pupils attending special schools enrolled at each level | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Over 100,000 | 30,000–99,999 | | | Elementary | High school |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| For the physically handicapped | 30 | 8 | 71 | 11,796 | 81% | 19% |
| For the mentally retarded | 19 | 10 | 79 | 9,364 | 94 | 6 |
| For pupils with behavior problems | 14 | 0 | 44 | 6,108 | 69 | 31 |
| For gifted children | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1,312 | .... | 100 |

TABLE 18.—SPECIALIZED HIGH SCHOOLS IN 231 CITIES OVER 30,000 IN POPULATION, 1947–48

| Type of high school | Districts having each type of high school | | Total number of specialized schools | Average enrolment in schools of each type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Vocational | 71 | 31% | 130 | 754 |
| Continuation | 31 | 13 | 59 | 479 |
| Technical | 25 | 11 | 33 | 1,614 |
| Academic | 24 | 10 | 162 | 2,261 |
| Commercial | 9 | 4 | 10 | 923 |

**TABLE 19.—NUMBER AND PERCENT OF CITIES RELEASING PUPILS FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, 1947–48**

| Group | City-school systems releasing pupils | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Over 100,000 | 34 | 50% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 52 | 32 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 130 | 34 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 151 | 33 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 149 | 28 |
| All groups | | |
| New England | | |
| Middle Atlantic | | |
| Southeast | | |
| Middle | | |
| Southwest | | |
| Northwest | | |
| Far West | | |
| All groups | | |

A general indication of the grade level at which these programs operate is afforded by the following tabulation of grade-level data from the 516 cities which in 1947-48 were releasing certain pupils for weekday religious instruction:

| *Grade in which certain pupils are released* | *Number of cities* |
|---|---|
| I | 147 |
| II | 161 |
| III | 211 |

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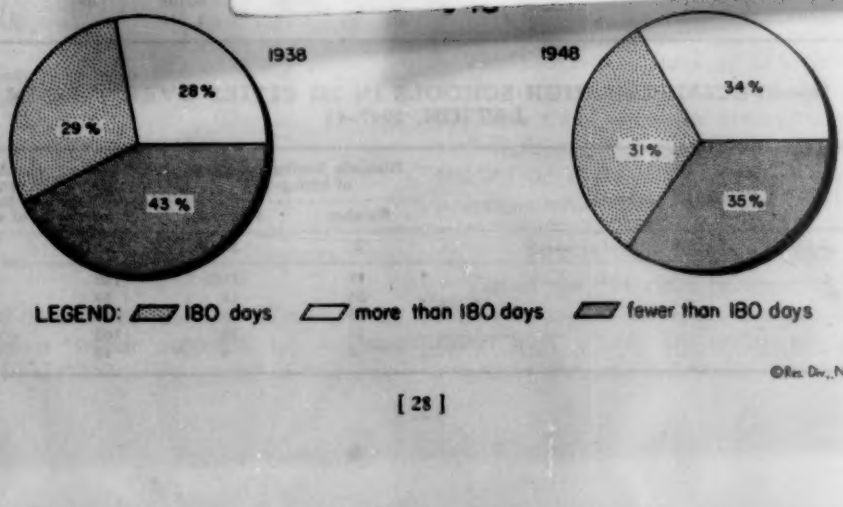


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# VI. Calendar and Schedule

Length of the school year and school day, division of the school year into semesters or terms, the hour for opening and closing schools, and the length of class periods in secondary schools are the important factors in school organization with which this section deals.

## The School Year

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city-school systems and the number and percent of schools that have somewhat longer and shorter school years. Significantly, the proportion of city systems with a school year of *180 days or longer* includes 65 percent of the cities for 1948 as compared with 57 percent for 1938 (See page 28).

TABLE 20.—LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL YEAR, 1948 AND 1938

| Number of days in school year | City-school systems, 1948 | | City-school systems, 1938 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 191 and over | 40 | 2% | 44 | 3% |
| 186–190 | 195 | 12 | 151 | 10 |
| 181–185 | 312 | 20 | 235 | 15 |
| 180 days | 494 | 31 | 457 | 29 |
| 175–179 | 424 | 27 | 445 | 29 |
| Below 175 | 125 | 8 | 215 | 14 |
| Total | 1,590 | 100% | 1,547 | 100% |

**TABLE 19.—NUMBER AND PERCENT OF CITIES RELEASING PUPILS FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, 1947–48**

| Group | City-school systems releasing pupils | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Over 100,000 | 34 | 50% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 52 | 32 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 130 | 34 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 151 | 33 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 149 | 28 |
| All groups | 516 | 32% |
| New England | 35 | 30% |
| Middle Atlantic | 189 | 51 |
| Southeast | 17 | 11 |
| Middle | 179 | 31 |
| Southwest | 14 | 12 |
| Northwest | 22 | 20 |
| Far West | 60 | 42 |
| All groups | 516 | 32% |

More than half the total number of pupils on released time in 1947-48 are identified with the school systems of cities over 100,000 in population. Two-thirds of them are found in the cities of two geographic regions: namely, the Middle Atlantic and the Middle states.

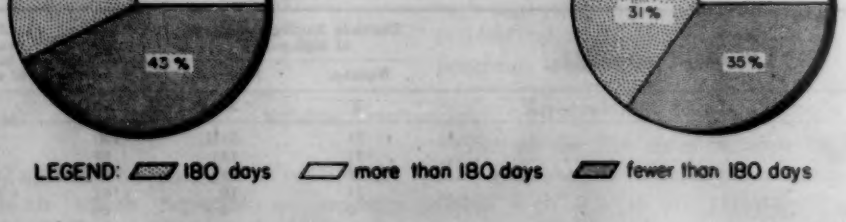
A general indication of the grade level at which these programs operate is afforded by the following tabulation of grade-level data from the 516 cities which in 1947-48 were releasing certain pupils for weekday religious instruction:

| *Grade in which certain pupils are released* | *Number of cities* |
|---|---|
| I | 147 |
| II | 161 |
| III | 211 |
| IV | 321 |
| V | 348 |
| VI | 352 |
| VII | 290 |
| VIII | 273 |
| IX | 227 |
| X | 204 |
| XI | 199 |
| XII | 194 |

Grades IV, V, and VI are those most often included in released-time programs, the number of cases in which other grades are involved decreasing with each successive grade beyond the sixth.

**FIGURE XIII**

**LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL YEAR IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1938 AND 1948**

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# VI. Calendar and Schedule

Length of the school year and school day, division of the school year into semesters or terms, the hour for opening and closing schools, and the length of class periods in secondary schools are the important factors in school organization with which this section deals.

## The School Year

The net result of such changes as have occurred between 1938 and 1948 in the length of the school year in city-school systems has been relatively slight. During the decade no change was made in the length of the school year in 47 percent of the city systems reporting. The year was lengthened in 38 percent of the cities and shortened in 15 percent of them, but the median school year in city systems in 1947-48 was 180.5 days and in 1937-38 was 180.2 days. For the cities of each population group and each region, the 1948 median was within 2.8 days of the 1938 median—in several instances, as close to it as 0.2 days. The two groups in which the highest percents lengthened the school year during the past decade were the cities above 30,000 in population. However, it was also in these two groups that the highest percents reduced the length of school terms. As a result, the net effect of the changes made has been relatively greater in the smaller cities. Among the various geographic regions, the two in which the net increase in length of school term has been greatest are the Southwest and Northwest states.

The length of the school year most frequently scheduled by city systems in both 1948 and 1938 is 180 days.

Table 20 and Figure XIII show the extent to which this term has become the standard in city-school systems and the number and percent of schools that have somewhat longer and shorter school years. Significantly, the proportion of city systems with a school year of *180 days or longer* includes 65 percent of the cities for 1948 as compared with 57 percent for 1938 (See page 28).

## School Terms, or Promotion Periods

Altho a substantial number of city-school systems still divide the school year into semesters and a few divide it into quarters, a strong trend is under way to reestablish the entire school year as a single unit, with annual promotions only. Figure XIV shows the extent to which annual promotions and shorter promotion periods were in use at the various school levels in city-school systems in 1947-48 and in 1937-38. The 1948 percents relating to annual promotions are impressive—93, 82, and 72 percent for elementary, junior high, and senior high schools, respectively. Also, for the secondary schools as well as for the elementary schools, the percents of cities now using the annual promotion plan are considerably higher than in 1938.

The percent of cities using annual promotion periods is in inverse ratio to size of city, or, in other words, as the size of city decreases the higher is the percent of cities in which the annual promotion plan is used. Table 21 brings out this relationship. It also shows, again, that annual promotions are used extensively in elementary schools, somewhat less often in junior high schools, and still less frequently at the senior high-school level. If similar percents were listed for the geographic regions, those that would stand out because of their extensive

TABLE 20.—LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL YEAR, 1948 AND 1938

| Number of days in school year | City-school systems, 1948 | | City-school systems, 1938 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 191 and over | 40 | 2% | 44 | 3% |
| 186–190 | 195 | 12 | 151 | 10 |
| 181–185 | 312 | 20 | 235 | 15 |
| 180 days | 494 | 31 | 457 | 29 |
| 175–179 | 424 | 27 | 445 | 29 |
| Below 175 | 125 | 8 | 215 | 14 |
| Total | 1,590 | 100% | 1,547 | 100% |

use of annual promotions would be New England and the Northwest region. The annual promotion plan is used relatively least in the Southwest region.

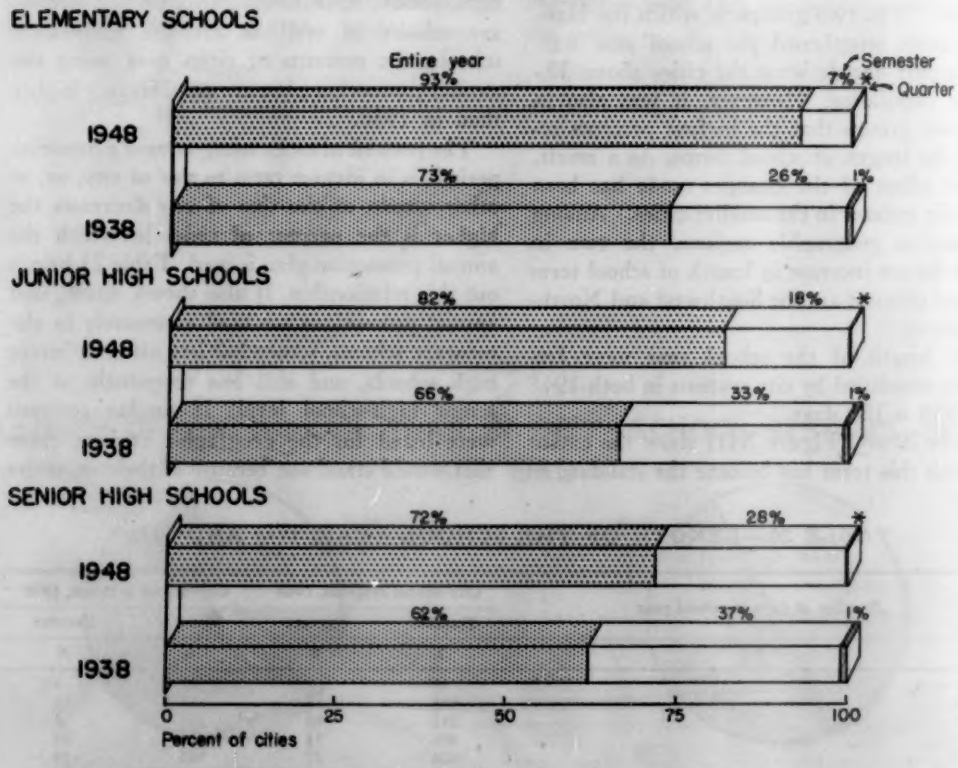
Changes in promotion periods have occurred with greatest relative frequency during the past decade in cities 30,000 to 100,000 in population and in cities of the Far West region. Also, the changes have occurred at the elementary-school level much more often than at the high-school level. The percents reporting some change since 1938, by city size and grade level, are given in Table 22.

By far the greatest proportion of the changes recently made in promotion periods has been from the semester to the annual promotion plan. Table 23 summarizes these and the other types of changes which have been made between 1938 and 1948. No school system reports that it has changed from either an annual or semester plan to the quarterly promotion period, and only a negligible number from the annual to the semiannual or semester plan.

Quarterly promotions have all but disappeared from city-school systems, only two cities indicating that this plan is still in use. One of these, which reported that quarterly promotions are made in all its schools—elementary, junior high, and senior high school—is a city between 5000 and 10,000 in population in the Middle Atlantic region. The other, which reported that the quarter plan is in use in its elementary and junior high schools, is a city between 30,000 and 100,000 in population in the Southeastern region.

**FIGURE XIV**

## PROMOTION PERIODS IN USE IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1938 AND 1948




*Less than one-half of 1 percent.

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TABLE 21.—PERCENT OF CITIES IN EACH POPULATION GROUP WHICH IN 1947-48 WERE USING THE ANNUAL PROMOTION PLAN

| Group | Elementary schools | | Junior high schools | | Senior high schools | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number reporting | Percent using annual promotions | Number reporting | Percent using annual promotions | Number reporting | Percent using annual promotions |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Over 100,000 | 63 | 60% | 52 | 42% | 63 | 35% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 152 | 84 | 119 | 72 | 145 | 54 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 343 | 91 | 244 | 80 | 317 | 69 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 400 | 95 | 260 | 85 | 385 | 78 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 440 | 99 | 275 | 92 | 400 | 80 |
| All groups | 1,398 | 93% | 950 | 82% | 1,310 | 72% |

TABLE 22.—PERCENT OF CITIES HAVING CHANGED THEIR PROMOTION PLANS SINCE 1938

| Group | Percent having changed the promotion period in | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Elementary schools | Junior high schools | Senior high schools |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Over 100,000 | 32% | 13% | 8% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 44 | 36 | 22 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 25 | 25 | 15 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 15 | 12 | 10 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 10 | 10 | 8 |
| All groups | 20% | 18% | 12% |

TABLE 23.—TYPES OF CHANGES MADE IN PROMOTION PERIODS IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS BETWEEN 1938 AND 1948

| Type of change | City-school systems making change at elementary level | | City-school systems making change at junior high-school level | | City-school systems making change at senior high-school level | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| From semester to year | 270 | 19% | 154 | 16% | 133 | 10% |
| From quarter to year | 5 | * | 3 | * | 6 | * |
| From quarter to semester | 1 | * | 1 | * | 1 | * |
| From year to semester | 2 | * | 10 | 1 | 15 | 1 |

* Less than one-half of 1 percent.

## The School Day

Each city which cooperated in this study was asked to report the "opening hour" and the "closing hour" for its elementary schools, junior high schools, and senior high schools. If different schedules are followed in different schools, the typical hour for opening and closing schools was to be listed for the year 1947-48 and for 1937-38. These reports made it possible to determine for each city the length of the typical school day as well as the time for schools to open and close.

In a majority of the city-school systems the length of the typical school day in 1947-48 was identical with that reported for 1937-38. In the systems where some change has occurred during the past decade the results almost cancel themselves out. Almost as many systems have lengthened the school day as have shortened it—or in other words, the median increase for the group which has lengthened the day is very close to the median decrease on the part of the group which has shortened the school day.

Specifically, the percent of cities that have increased and decreased the length of the school day at each grade level between 1938 and 1948 is as follows:

| | *Increased* | *Decreased* |
|---|---|---|
| Elementary | 12% | 16% |
| Junior high school | 19 | 19 |
| Senior high school | 22 | 20 |

The medians of the increases and decreases in the length of the school day are similar in size for all the grade levels.

| | *Median increase* | *Median decrease* |
|---|---|---|
| Elementary | 22 minutes | 26 minutes |
| Junior high school | 24 minutes | 26 minutes |
| Senior high school | 25 minutes | 26 minutes |

Relatively fewer of the large cities than of the smaller ones have changed the length of their school day. This fact is shown in Table 24. Another fact that can be noted from this table is that changes have been fewest at the elementary level and most numerous in the daily schedule for senior high schools.

From the regional tabulations, which are not presented with respect to this item, changes in daily schedules have occurred with greatest frequency in cities of the Southeastern region. The percents for that region are 41, 50, and 47 percent—considerably larger than the 28, 38, and 42 percent as given for all cities in the final line of Table 24.

Just as the length of the school day has remained relatively constant during the past ten years, so have the hours for the opening and closing of schools. Half to two-thirds of the city systems follow the same opening and closing schedules now that they followed in 1937-38. Table 25 summarizes the reports on this matter for all the cities which reported their daily schedules for both 1938 and 1948. From an analysis which is not presented in tabular form in this bulletin it appears that 70 to 80 percent of the changes which have been made in cities over 100,000 in population have been to some *later hour* for opening and closing schools. In cities below 30,000 in population, on the contrary, a majority of the shifts have been to some *earlier hour* for opening and closing schools.

The proportion of cities whose opening and closing hours in 1947-48 fall within each of the fifteen minute intervals between "by 8:15 a. m." and "after 4:00 p.m." is shown in Table 26.

The most popular hour for opening elementary schools in city-school systems is 9:00 a.m., with 8:30 and 8:45 following in that order. For junior high schools and also for senior high schools 8:30 a.m. is the most widely used opening hour, with 9:00 and 8:45 as the favored alternates.

The most popular hour for closing elementary schools is 3:30 p.m., followed by 4:00, 3:00, 3:15, and 3:45 p.m., in that order. In junior high schools the favorite closing hour again is 3:30, but the order of the alternate hours is somewhat different: 4:00, 3:15, 3:45, and 3:00 p.m. For senior high schools the mode or most frequently used closing hour is 4:00 p.m., followed by 3:30, 3:00, 3:45, and 3:15 p.m., in the order named.

**TABLE 24.—PERCENT OF CITIES HAVING CHANGED THEIR TYPICAL SCHOOL DAY SINCE 1938**

| Group | Percent having either a longer or a shorter school day in 1948 than in 1938 in | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Elementary schools | Junior high schools | Senior high schools |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Over 100,000 | 16% | 18% | 27% |
| 30,000–99,999 | 22 | 30 | 31 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 27 | 37 | 39 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 28 | 39 | 46 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 32 | 43 | 46 |
| All groups | 28% | 38% | 42% |

**TABLE 25.—PERCENT OF CITIES THAT HAVE CHANGED THE HOUR FOR OPENING OR CLOSING THEIR SCHOOLS SINCE 1938**

| Grade level | Number of cities reporting | Opening and closing time the same, 1948 and 1938 | Change in hour for opening | Change in hour for closing | Change for both opening and closing hour | Hour for opening made | | Hour for closing made | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Earlier | Later | Earlier | Later |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Elementary schools | 1,399 | 68% | 5% | 14% | 13% | 11% | 7% | 16% | 11% |
| Junior high schools | 935 | 57 | 8 | 14 | 21 | 17 | 12 | 20 | 15 |
| Senior high schools | 1,330 | 53 | 7 | 13 | 27 | 20 | 14 | 21 | 19 |

Supplementary analyses bring out the fact that only one city, in the 5000 to 10,000 population group, opens its elementary schools earlier than 8:00 a.m. (It was following the same opening schedule in 1948 as in 1938.) Only seven systems open their elementary schools later than 9:00 a.m. In other words, virtually all elementary schools open within the hour 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. No city reported that its junior high schools open earlier than 8:00 a.m. and only eight cities open them later than 9:00 a.m. Five cities report that their senior high schools open earlier than 8:00 a.m. and six that they open later than 9:00 a.m. So, for junior and senior high schools, too, 8:00 to 9:00 a.m., inclusive, covers nearly all situations.

Closing hours show greater variability in pattern than opening hours. In seventeen cities the elementary schools close before 2:00 p.m. and two programs end later than 4:00 p.m. The junior high-school day is ended by 2:00 p.m. in thirteen cities and carries on beyond 4:00 p.m. in eleven cities. With still greater variation at the senior high-school level, forty-one cities end the day before 2:00 p.m. and twenty-two continue their senior high schools later than 4:00 p.m. But, in spite of the greater difference in closing time than in the time for opening schools, almost all programs end within the two-hour period, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., inclusive—three-fourths of them between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m.

## TABLE 26.—PERCENT OF CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS USING SPECIFIED HOURS FOR OPENING AND CLOSING THEIR SCHOOLS, 1947–48

| Time interval | Percent of city systems following schedule in | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Elementary schools | Junior high schools | Senior high schools |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| For OPENING schools: | | | |
| By 8:15 a. m. | 3% | 11% | 17% |
| 8:16 to 8:30 a. m. | 19 | 38 | 40 |
| 8:31 to 8:45 a. m. | 21 | 24 | 21 |
| 8:46 to 9:00 a. m. | 57 | 26 | 22 |
| After 9:00 a. m. | * | 1 | * |
| For CLOSING schools: | | | |
| By 2:15 p. m. | 3% | 3% | 5% |
| 2:16 to 2:30 p. m. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2:31 to 2:45 p. m. | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 2:46 to 3:00 p. m. | 13 | 9 | 11 |
| 3:01 to 3:15 p. m. | 12 | 14 | 12 |
| 3:16 to 3:30 p. m. | 37 | 27 | 24 |
| 3:31 to 3:45 p. m. | 14 | 16 | 16 |
| 3:46 to 4:00 p. m. | 17 | 26 | 24 |
| After 4:00 p. m. | * | 1 | 2 |

* Less than one-half of 1 percent.

## TABLE 27.—NUMBER AND PERCENT OF CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS HAVING HIGH-SCHOOL CLASS PERIODS OF VARIOUS LENGTHS, 1948 AND 1938

| Length of period | Number of times reported | | Percent of cities | | Cumulative percent[a] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1948 | 1938 | 1948 | 1938 | 1948 | 1938 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 65 minutes or more | 8 | 15 | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| 60–64 minutes | 421 | 269 | 30 | 19 | 31 | 20 |
| 55–59 minutes | 338 | 207 | 24 | 15 | 55 | 35 |
| 50–54 minutes | 203 | 146 | 15 | 10 | 70 | 45 |
| 45–49 minutes | 269 | 486 | 19 | 35 | 89 | 80 |
| 40–44 minutes | 159 | 271 | 11 | 20 | 100* | 100* |
| Less than 40 minutes | 2 | 6 | ** | ** | 100 | 100 |
| Total | 1400 | 1400 | 100% | 100% | .... | .... |
| Median class period | 56.0 min. | 49.4 min. | .... | .... | .... | .... |

* More than 99.5 percent.

** Less than one-half of 1 percent.

[a] Each percent in columns 6 and 7 shows what proportion of city systems use a class period as long as, or longer than, the number of minutes indicated in the corresponding item of column 1. *Read column 6 thus:* 1 percent of cities in 1948 had class periods of 65 minutes or more; 31 percent, 60 minutes or more; 55 percent, 55 minutes or more; and so on.

## High-School Class Periods

The median length of class periods in senior high schools has been increasing during the past ten years. Table 27 is essentially a frequency distribution based on the length of the typical class periods reported for 1947-48 and 1937-38. The median high-school class period of 56 minutes for 1948 represents an increase of 6.6 minutes over the corresponding median of 49.4 minutes for 1938.

The percents of city systems having typical high-school class periods of various lengths are shown in columns 4 to 7 of this table. More than half the cities in 1948 report a typical class period of 55 minutes or longer, with nearly a third still having class periods of less than 50 minutes duration. Ten years ago, on the other hand, only a third had class periods of 55 minutes or longer and more than half had periods shorter than 50 minutes.

No essential difference in the present length of the typical high-school class period is apparent for cities of different sizes, but during the past ten years the greatest increases are identified with the smallest cities. Table 28 gives the medians for each city-size and regional group, and the differences between each corresponding pair of 1938 and 1948 medians. New England and the Middle Atlantic regions are characterized by relatively short periods and minor increases in period length since 1938. In cities of the Southeast and Southwest regions the median class period is a full hour in length, and the increase made in the Southeast region during the past ten years is larger than that shown for any other region.

**TABLE 28.—MEDIAN LENGTH OF HIGH-SCHOOL CLASS PERIODS, 1948 AND 1938**

| Group | Median number of minutes in class periods | | Increase (column 2 minus column 3) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1948 | 1938 | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Over 100,000 | 53.3 | 50.0 | + 3.3 |
| 30,000–99,999 | 55.4 | 51.3 | + 4.1 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 56.0 | 51.0 | + 5.0 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 55.8 | 48.5 | + 7.3 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 56.9 | 49.0 | + 7.9 |
| New England | 47.3 | 45.9 | + 1.4 |
| Middle Atlantic | 49.7 | 48.6 | + 1.1 |
| Southeast | 60.7 | 49.6 | +11.1 |
| Middle | 56.8 | 48.8 | + 8.0 |
| Southwest | 61.3 | 56.6 | + 4.7 |
| Northwest | 59.8 | 56.7 | + 3.1 |
| Far West | 57.7 | 56.6 | + 1.1 |
| All groups | 56.0 | 49.4 | + 6.6 |

# VII. Size of Schools and Classes

Those who supplied the facts about present and recent patterns of school organization were asked to give a professional opinion on two often-discussed basic questions in organizational policy: (a) What would you regard as the ideal size for schools at each grade level in your school system—elementary, junior high, and senior high schools? and (b) What do you regard as the optimum size for the average class—in elementary, junior high, and senior high schools? These judgments, for whatever validity they have, are here compared with the actual size of schools and classes as reported in this study.

## Size of Schools

The average enrolments for schools of various types in all the cities which supplied complete information about them were: for elementary schools, 402; for junior high schools, 663; and for senior high schools, 977. The median size recommended for an elementary school is somewhat larger than the actual average—457, as compared with 402. For junior and senior high schools, on the other hand, the median ideal enrolments are smaller than the averages—521 pupils for the junior high school and 677 for the senior high school.

As the data in Table 29 reveal, the actual average enrolments varied considerably with city size and, especially in the case of secondary schools, with geographic region. By and large, however, the average enrolments for schools of each type are not greatly different from the "median ideal schools" according to the best judgment of the respondents.

In practice, as well as in the recommendations of school administrators, the smallest enrolments are identified with the elementary schools, the next in size with junior high schools, and the largest with senior high schools. In order to move toward the recommended medians elementary schools would be increased slightly in size, junior high schools would be reduced in size to some extent, and senior high schools on the average would be cut back about 30 percent.

## Class Size

The median number of pupils recommended as "the reasonable and desirable goal in class size" for elementary schools was twenty-nine, for junior high schools twenty-nine, and for senior high schools twenty-eight. There were a few respondents who recommended classes smaller than twenty and a few who would let them run to forty-five pupils or more in their respective school systems. The great bulk of the replies, however, as can be noted in Table 30, select classes somewhere between twenty-five and thirty-five pupils for schools at all

TABLE 29.—AVERAGE ENROLMENTS AND RECOMMENDED ENROLMENTS FOR THE SCHOOLS AT EACH LEVEL

| Group | Average actual enrolments | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Elementary schools | Junior high schools | Senior high schools |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Over 100,000 | 570 | 1,013 | 1,701 |
| 30,000–99,999 | 349 | 638 | 1,201 |
| 10,000–29,999 | 288 | 504 | 773 |
| 5,000–9,999 | 259 | 318 | 455 |
| 2,500–4,999 | 246 | 210 | 324 |
| New England | 238 | 535 | 877 |
| Middle Atlantic | 479 | 888 | 1,363 |
| Southeast | 406 | 547 | 664 |
| Middle | 383 | 485 | 904 |
| Southwest | 420 | 674 | 743 |
| Northwest | 330 | 492 | 734 |
| Far West | 480 | 915 | 1,208 |
| All groups | 402 pupils | 663 pupils | 977 pupils |
| Median of the enrolment recommended as ideal | 457 pupils | 521 pupils | 677 pupils |
| Number of cases on which the medians are based | 1,143 cities | 914 cities | 1,127 cities |

grade levels as the reasonable and desirable objective in class size for their own school systems.

On the matter of recommended class size there is striking agreement among the replies coming from the cities of every size and from every geographic region. The smallest median of the proposals for elementary classes for any city-size or regional group is twenty-nine (the same as that for all the groups) and the largest is thirty-two. For junior high-school classes, all the group medians fall within the range, twenty-eight to thirty-one, and all the group medians for senior high-school classes are either twenty-eight or twenty-nine. In other words, the medians shown in columns 5, 6, and 7 of Table 30 closely approximate the recommendations of administrators from cities large and small, and from all the geographic regions, as to the optimum class size in city schools.

Comparison of actual class size in 1947-48 with these recommended goals implies that progress is being made in the direction desired by administrators, but that the typical class is still somewhat larger than the recommended standard. (See columns 2, 3, and 4 of Table 30.)

Each city reported, to the best of its ability, the average class size in 1947-48 and in 1937-38 at each of the three levels. The medians from these reports show the direction of recent trends and the distance that yet remains between prevailing practice and recommended goals. The story is told graphically in Figure XV.

According to the data of this study the typical elementary-school class has been reduced in size by two pupils since 1938 and should be reduced by three more pupils to reach the desirable goal in class size. Junior high-school classes, also, have been reduced by two pupils during the past decade and must be reduced by the same number in years to come if the recommended goal is to be attained. The typical senior high-school class in 1948 was smaller by two pupils than that of 1938 and stands now exactly at the mark recommended as the goal for high-school classes.

The largest reductions in median class size during the past decade are reported by cities 30,000 to 100,000 in population and by the cities of the Middle Atlantic region. The three regions for which the group medians for 1948 indicate the largest classes are the Far West, the Southwest, and the Southeast.

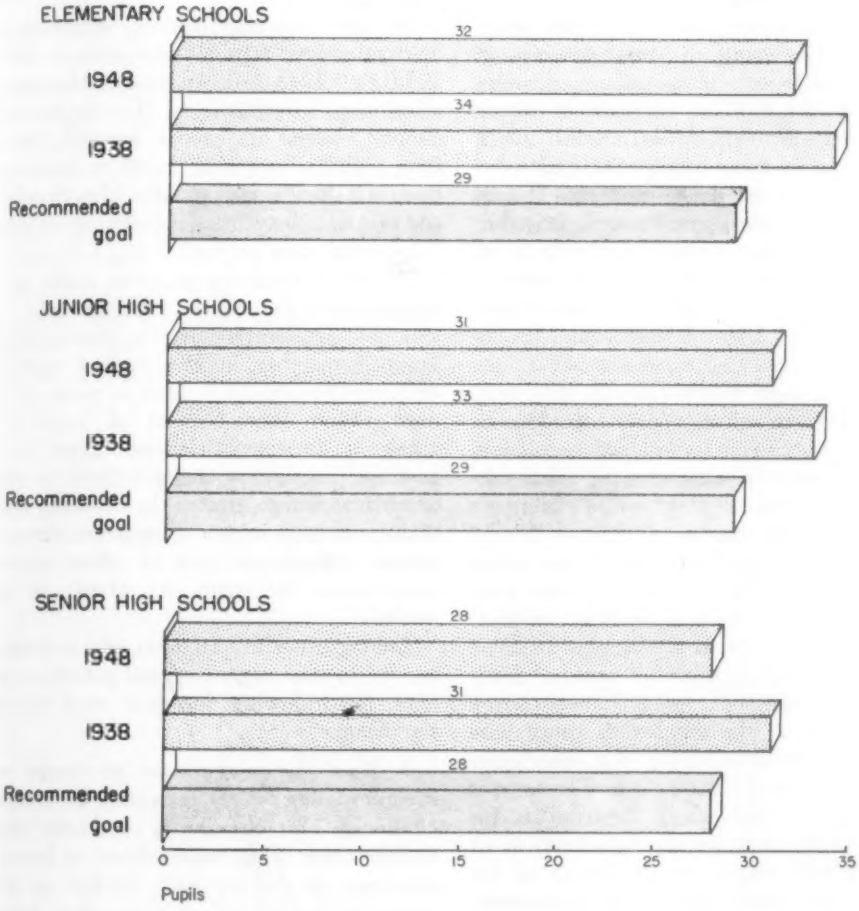
Certain significant comparisons are afforded by the data in Table 30. Whereas only 10 percent of the respondents recommended elementary classes of thirty-five pupils or more as the goal for their school systems, 27 percent report that the average elementary class now exceeds thirty-five. Similarly, 21 percent report that their average junior high-school class exceeds thirty-five pupils whereas only 9 percent would set the goal that high for their respective school systems. These and other percents in this table indicate that classes, generally speaking, still are too large and need to be further reduced in size toward the standards here proposed.

**TABLE 30.—SIZE OF THE TYPICAL CLASS IN CITY-SCHOOL SYSTEMS, 1948, IN COMPARISION WITH THE SIZE OF CLASS RECOMMENDED BY CITY-SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

| Number of pupils per class | Percent of cities reporting typical classes of the size indicated, 1948, in | | | Percent of respondents recommending average classes of the size indicated in | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Elementary | Junior high | Senior high | Elementary | Junior high | Senior high |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 45 and over | 1% | 1% | * | * | * | * |
| 40–44 | 5 | 4 | 1% | 2% | 2% | 1% |
| 35–39 | 21 | 16 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 |
| 30–34 | 41 | 35 | 27 | 34 | 31 | 25 |
| 25–29 | 26 | 32 | 40 | 45 | 49 | 50 |
| 20–24 | 6 | 11 | 21 | 10 | 11 | 18 |
| Below 20 | * | 1 | 2 | 1 | * | * |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Median | 32 pupils | 31 pupils | 28 pupils | 29 pupils | 29 pupils | 28 pupils |
| Number of cases on which medians are based | 1,443 cities | 987 cities | 1,360 cities | 1,352 cities | 924 cities | 1,272 cities |

FIGURE XV

## MEDIAN SIZE OF CLASS AT EACH SCHOOL LEVEL IN CITY SYSTEMS

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## VIII. Next Steps in School Organization

In the area of school organization, no less than in that of automobile styles, the temptation always is strong to acquire the latest model. Perhaps many of the fragments of "noble experiments" in school organization which mark the trail of educational history were cast there by school systems which adopted them in form but not in spirit—because of fad rather than function. If any changes or adaptations seem to be suggested or implied by the trends reviewed in this bulletin, they should be introduced, in every instance, not because "others are doing it" but because the practice will help to meet some demonstrated need.

*Should the scope of education be extended?*—Should a given school system introduce or change the number of its kindergartens, nursery schools, or child-care centers? Obviously the answer should be in terms of children's needs—not merely because 3 cities in 5 now have public kindergartens and are increasing their number year by year; nor because with the withdrawal of federal financial support, some cities have reduced the number of their nursery schools and child-care centers. Similarly, the establishment of a junior college should depend on the number of youth who need it rather than on the fact that other cities are, or are not, establishing them. The same is true of separate high-school departments for veterans, adult education, special schools of all types, and with respect to the length of the school year for pupils and for the professional staff.

*What administrative divisions best provide for children's needs?*—Choice of the 6-3-3, 6-6, 8-4, 7-5, or some other plan of organization should be made on the basis of the program to be carried out and the pupils to be served. Will the creation of a separate primary division help to meet the needs of young children? Will a six-, seven-, or eight-year elementary school best accomplish what the community expects of its elementary schools? Does a junior high school of two, three, or four years provide an improved school environment for the early teen-age group in a given school system? Should the junior college, if there is one, be administered with, or separate from, the senior high school? These are questions which the trend of practice alone cannot properly answer.

As one notes the relatively slight increase in the number of junior high schools between 1938 and 1948 in city systems the question arises as to why this is so. Has the movement merely reached its proper zenith? Has the junior high-school plan failed to measure up to expectations? Has it been blindly adopted and misused to such an extent that its alleged values may soon be lost?

Whatever divisions or units make up the organization framework of a given school system, and irrespective of the grades that are grouped together in the various units, the dividing lines should be fixed in terms of pupil need rather than because of tradition or change-for-the-sake-of-change. Even on the basis of practice no single pattern is clearly dominant. And so great is the variation in community patterns within many urban areas, that several different patterns of school organization within the same city often are really needed.

Among other crucial tests which should be applied to most organizational policies or practices, the following questions seem especially significant:

1. *Does the arrangement encourage maximum provision for the individual differences of children?* This question is especially vital as decisions are being made either to introduce, continue, or discard such devices as ability grouping, individualized instruction, remedial classes, special guidance departments, mid-year or semester promotions, and summer sessions. It is also important when policies are adopted with respect to class size and over-all size of schools. In fact, this is one question that seldom can be ignored in planning any phase of school organization.

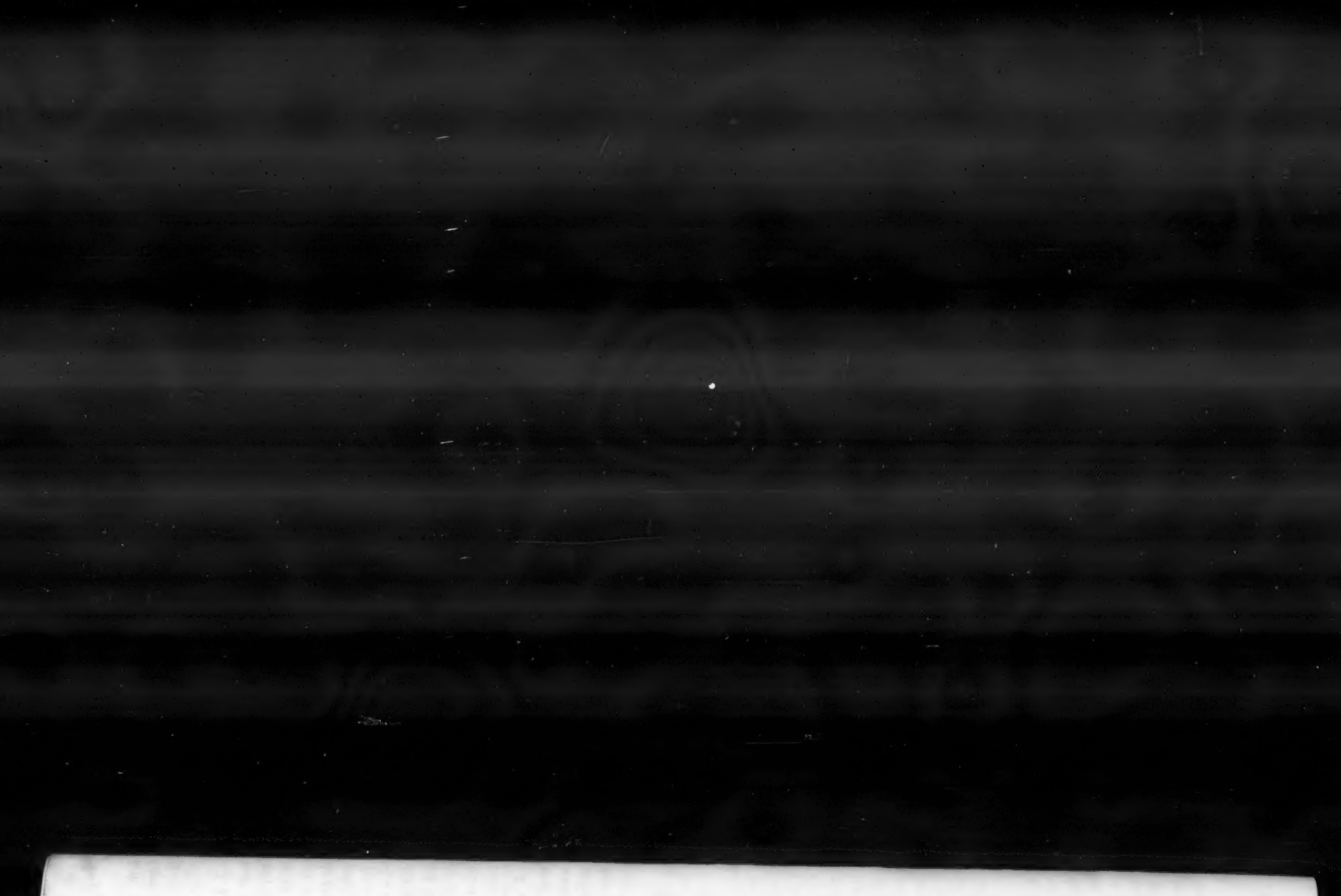
2. *Does the arrangement take full advantage of the preparation and special competencies of classroom teachers?* Departmentalization, especially in the upper elementary grades, and the platoon school were introduced chiefly to capitalize on teaching specialties. Other practices, too, either help or hinder teachers in devoting their energies to the teaching and guidance services which they are best qualified to per-

form. Class size is an important controlling factor, as are the provisions of adequate professional leadership, suitable instructional materials, audio-visual aids, and library service.

3. *Does the arrangement give classroom teachers sufficient freedom of action, but not more than they can effectively use?* This criterion is significant in schedule making, in degree of adherence to a specific curriculum, in the grouping and promotion of pupils, and in many other aspects of school organization. The more competent the instructional staff the more effective will be its use of such things as class periods of indefinite length, individualized instruction, a flexible, currently planned curriculum, and pupil classification which makes use of broad "divisions" and eliminates traditional "grade" lines.

4. *What special needs of pupils are being cared for?* Is the school system so organized as to meet the needs of pupils for guidance, health service, library service, recreation, transportation, lunchroom service, camping experience, and work experience? Are there incentives and opportunities for children who are especially talented in certain fields of endeavor?

5. *Does the organization plan which is being considered make for harmonious and efficient work on the part of all concerned?* Usually a given plan must be carried out by the cooperative efforts of several persons—perhaps the entire staff. Hence, each arrangement should be so developed that it involves no discrimination or makes no unreasonable demand on any person or group. For the same reason it should be as simple as possible and should involve none of the useless activities which are popularly known as red tape.

Other questions of similar type will be fully explored as the bases for evolution of practice in school systems where organization is the servant rather than the master of the program. For them, the trends reviewed in this bulletin should ward off complacency, but such schools will seek and find the road to progress by hewing to the line of their respective educational needs.

IF all children were alike, school administration would be simplified. Since children are not alike, the first consideration in educational planning is how best to serve these educational differences. Rigidity in school administration developed at a time when little thought was given to individual differences, and when all children were expected to learn the same things. Future administrative practices must become more flexible.—NEA Department of Elementary School Principals, *The Elementary-School Principalship—Today and Tomorrow*.